A SERMON PREACHED TO The Honourable Houſe of *Commons* Aſſembled in PARLIAMENT. AT THEIR PVBLIQVE *FAST*, NOVEM. 17. 1640.

By *Cornelius Burges* D. D.

Publiſhed by Order of that *Houſe*.

The third Edition reviſed and corrected by the Author.

LONDON,
Printed by *Iohn Legatt*, for *P. Stephens*, and *C. Meredith*, at the Gilded LION in Saint *Pauls* CHVRCH-YARD. 1641.

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TO THE HONOVRABLE HOVSE OF COMMONS now Assembled in PARLIAMENT.

When first it pleased You *to require our service in Preaching* at Your *late Publike* Fast, *we resolved to close our eyes against all Clouds of discouragement arising from our owne unworthinesse and insufficiency, and to set our selves wholly to seek what the Lord would command us to deliver in his Name, at such a time, to such an Honorable and awfull Assembly, with a total denyall of our selves.* Psal. 82.

And albeit we should have been glad to have been spared this exposing of our selves to the publike view; yet, You *appointed otherwise, we hold it equall that the joynt* entreaty *of the* Representative Body *of the whole* Commonalty *of the kingdome should bee regarded, and have chosen rather that others should*

censure us of weakenesse, *than* You *should charge us with* Disobedience: *Your* Request *being no lesse than a* command; *and* Your *acceptance sufficient to give value to things of themselves both meane and worthlesse.*

Wherefore, according to our Dutie, so willingly as the consciousnesse of our slender performances would permit we obey Your Order, *and doe now, although somewhat late, humbly offer these two plaine Sermons (for, who expects other in a* Fast?) *at the footstoole of* Your Tribunall, *as a lasting Monument of Our Gratitude for* Your *encouraging* Approbation *of, and solemne* Thankes *for our weake endeavours in the preaching of them.*

If in some places wee have taken that just liberty which all others have done before us, we trust it shall not be imputed; so long as in the most materiall passages we have kept to the very words which at first we used, so farre as was necessary; and have not wittingly swerved an haires breadth from the sense and substance in the residue.

We have indeed pared off some Repetitions, which in speaking had their use, the more to inculcate, and the better to set on the matter, but would not have been so gratefull in Writing, because Readers account every thing too long that hath any thing too much. We

have

have likewise contracted some expressions, which in discourses of so much length, could hardly be so concise as we desired, Memory being not always at hand to give birth to every Conception of our minds in such formes as we intended. And some few things wee have added, where straites of time, or defect of memory made some balkes in the first delivery.

What ever our performances be, wee humbly leave them in Your hands, and under Your Honorable Protection, which we are bold to expect, because they are by Your own Act drawne from us, and that in a time so queasie and distempered as can hardly beare that food, or Physick which is needfull for it. Seldome doth a wise Reproofe, *a necessary* Exhortation, *or wholsome* Doctrine *meet with an* obedient Eare.

The God of Heaven steere all Your weightie consultations by his own Counsell, to his own Glory; cover You *still under his own Wing, and make You the most* accomplisht, *best* united, *and most* successefull *and* glorious house of Commons *that ever sate in that* High Court; *but chiefly in the effectuall endeavouring of a further Sanction of, and stronger Guard about our true* Palladium, *the true* Religion, *already established among us; in the perfecting of the* Reformation *of it; in the erecting, maintaining, protecting, and incouraging of an able, Godly, faithfull, zealous,*

profitable Preaching * Ministery, *in every Parish Church and Chappell throughout England and Wales; and in the interceding to the Kings sacred Majesty for the setting up of a Faithfull, Iudicious, and Zealous* Magistracy, *where yet the same is wanting, to be ever at hand to back such a* Ministery: *without either of which, not only the* power of Godlinesse *will soone degenerate into* formality, *&* zeale *into Lukewarmnesse; but,* Popery, Arminianisme, Socinianisme, Prophanenesse, Apostacy, *and* Atheisme *it self will more and more crowd in upon us, and prevaile against us, doe* You *all* You *can by all other meanes.*

This was our joynt & earnest suit to You, in Preaching; and we now again *beseech* You to set your hearts and hands to this *Work*, as *Benhail*, *Obadiah* and other *Princes* in *Iudah* did.

2 *Chr.* 17.7. 8,9.

Act. 20.32.

And now, commending You to God and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build *You* up further, and to give You an inheritance among all them which be sanctified; *and these our Labours to his further blessing, whereby all may speedily be brought under the line of his* Covenant, *which is our* safety; *that he may* continue *with us, which is our* Glory; and we with him, *which is* our happinesse: *we rest,*

The Summe of both Sermons.

Yours, most devoted to the service of Your Faith in all Dutie,

Cornelius Burges.
Stephen Marshall.

THE FIRST SERMON,
at the late Faſt of the Commons Houſe of *Parliament*, wherein this Preface was uſed, before the Text was read.

THat great Apoſtle Saint Paul, *when he had to doe with wiſe men, held it a point of wiſedome to paſſe by ſome things which hee would not have wayved among meaner capacities. His practiſe ſhall be now my preſident.*

This Honourable Aſſembly having deſigned mee to beare ſo great a ſhare in this weightie Worke, I hold it my duty to conſider, that, how weake and unworthy ſo ever I my ſelfe bee, yet I am now to ſpeake to Wiſe Men, *who neede not ſo much to be Catechiſed touching the* Nature, *as to be incited and quickned to the principall* Vſe *of a Religious* Faſt, *which conſiſteth not ſolely in ſuch drawing neere to God by extraordinary Prayer and Humiliation as may produce a totall divorce from our deereſt Luſts, but alſo (and that more principally) in particular, formall, ſolemne, entire engaging and binding of our ſelves, by an indiſſoluble* Covenant, *to that God whoſe face and favour we ſeeke, and implore.*

And this I apprehend to be a ſubject more neceſſary, by how much this dutie appeares to be leſſe heeded and regarded by the greater number of the choyſeſt Chriſtians.

For, as it too often falls out, even among the beſt, in participating that ſacred and dreadfull Ordinance of the Lords Supper, *that moe labour more to* diſcerne, *and* feed *upon his bleſſed Body and bloud, ſpiritually by faith, to make Chriſt their owne, (which muſt be done too) than effectually, totally and abſo-*

lutely

lutely to devote, reſigne, and yeeld up themſelves unto him, in the act of receiving, to be his ſervants: *So it doth not ſeldome happen in the exerciſe of holy* Faſting, *that not a few of that ſmall handfull which deſire to approach the preſence of God in truth, are more converſant in ſearching, confeſſing, bewailing of ſinne, and in craving mercy, (all which be neceſſary duties) than in working up their hearts to that indiſpenſible pitch of heavenly reſolution, ſincerely to ſtrike through a religious and inviolable* Covenant *with their* God. *Whereas without this, all their labour will bee utterly loſt, their expectations fruſtrate, they take the glorious Name of God in vaine, provoke the eyes of his glory more againſt them, cauſing him infinitely to loath and abominate both their perſons, and ſervice; nor ſhall they ever, by all their crying, and ſighing, no not by whole rivers of teares, bee able to draw downe an arme of Mercy from Heaven to come and ſave them.*

The more effectually therefore to provoke both my ſelfe and you at this time, to the due performance of this moſt neglected (but moſt neceſſary) dutie, I have thought fit, in a very plaine and familiar way ſutable to the nature of this exerciſe (which ought to be no leſſe ſerious than ſolemne) to work and chafe into all our hearts the ſtrength and ſpirit of that good Word of God, which you ſhall finde written for our inſtruction in

The Propheſie of *Ieremiah*, Chap. 50. V. 5.

They ſhall aske the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, ſaying, *Come, and let us ioyne our ſelves unto the Lord in an everlaſting Covenant that ſhall not be forgotten.*

HIch words are part of a Prophecy (terrible to *Babylon*, but comfortable to the Church) uttered, and penned by *Ieremy*, about the fourth yeare both of the *Babyloniſh captivitie*, and of the tributary reigne of *Zedekiah*. The occaſion, this. The *Introduction* to the maine *Diſcourſe*.

The Prophet having laboured about thirtie yeares, to humble Iudah by continuall ringing in her eares the dolefull tydings of a ſore captivitie approaching, could not be beleeved. But, when once the quicke and ſad ſenſe of their bondage under the Chaldean had forced them to an acknowledgement of the truth of his Propheſies, hee found it as hard a taske to worke their hearts to any expectation of deliverance. For, as it is a worke even inſuperable to poſſeſſe a people ripe for deſtruction, that any evill is neere them, till the wrath of God breake in upon them and overwhelme them; ſo is it a buſineſſe of little leſſe difficultie to hold up the ſpirits even of Gods owne people, once caſt under any great extremity, without any hope of reſcue.

This was *Iudah's* caſe. Before the Babylonian had laid this yoke on their necks, God had plainly revealed, and often inculcated that it ſhould lye upon them juſt 70. yeares and no longer; after which they ſhould have libertie of returne to their owne land againe. Howbeit, the weight of their miſery, the abſence of God, (who had *caſt them out of his ſight*) together with the inſolence and cruelty of their proud oppreſſors,

Ier. 25. 11. 29. 10.

Introduction. preſſors, had throwne them ſo low in diſconſolateneſſe, that nothing which Gods Prophets could either now ſay or doe, was ſufficient to raiſe up their hearts to any aſſurance of returne. The ſame ſtrength which Luſt hath to draw men from obedience, it will ſurely have afterwards to drive men from beleeving, in their greateſt neceſſities of *living by faith.*

The maine beame which ſtucke in their eyes to hinder their ſight of deliverance promiſed, was, the greatneſſe and invincible potencie of the Chaldean Monarchy (then in her pride) and more eſpecially the ſtrength of *Babylon* the Queene and Miſtreſſe of that puiſſant Empire. How could they hope to be delivered, when ſhe that commanded the world detained them? *Shall the prey be taken from the Mightie, or the lawfull captive delivered?* Eſay 49. 24.

To cure them therefore of this deſperate deſponſion of mind, the Lord ſtirred up this Prophet to foretell the totall and finall ſubverſion and ruine of *Babylon* and of that whole Monarchy; and further, to declare from God, that the deſolation thereof ſhould be the diſſolution of the captivitie of *Iudah* in it. The better to aſſure them of all this, *Ieremiah* wrote the whole Prophecy againſt *Babylon* (contained in this Chapter and the next following) in a booke by it ſelfe, which he ſent to *Babylon* by the hand of *Seraiah* (Lord Chamberlaine to *Zedekiah*, and now going in an Embaſſie from his Maſter to great *Nebuchadnezzar*) with Command from the Prophet, that, after the reading thereof to the captives, he ſhould *binde a ſtone unto it, and caſt it into the midſt of Euphrates*, with this ſaying pronounced over it, *Thus ſhall Babylon ſinke and ſhall not riſe, &c.* Ier. 51. 59.

But to haſten to my Text, In the five firſt verſes of this Chapter, the Prophet ſummarily compriſeth the ſubſtance of his whole Prophecy againſt *Babylon*, declaring, 1. her *deſtruction*, 2. the *Meanes*, 3. the conſequent thereof to the people of God.

1. Firſt, he makes Proclamation, and an *Oiyes* as it were, to all the world, to come and behold the Great Worke hee was to doe againſt *Babylon* the chiefe Citie of the Empire, againſt *Bell* the chiefe Idoll of that Citie, and againſt *Merodach* the glory both of that Citie and Empire; though the King then raigning when God meant to deſtroy it, ſhould prove as potent as he that was the firſt of that name, who for reſtoring that declining Empire to her ancient Splendor, and for tranſlating the Imperiall Seat from *Nineve* to *Babylon*, obtained from poſteritie the worſhip of a God, and transferred his name to all his ſucceſ-

ſors

sors, as the name of *Pharaoh* to the Egyptian Kings, *Benhadad* to the Syrian Monarchs, and of *Augustus* to the Roman Emperours: Yea, although all these should joyne together to withstand the downefall of that Monarchy, yet desolation should bee brought over it and them, they should be confounded and removed for ever, *Vers.* 1. 2. and all to make way for the deliverance of the Church. *Introduction.*

But secondly, what should be the *meanes* of such an unexpected destruction? An Army from the *North* of the *Medes* and *Persians*, both of which, but more especially the *Medes*, were situated towards the *North* from *Babylon*, and therefore ominous. That these were the men appeares more fully by their description in the residue of this Chapter and in the next. This Northerne Army should bee the confusion of *Babylon*, the confusion of *Babylon* should prove the restoring of the Church (*ver.* 3.) And the restoring of the Church should produce a *Covenant* with God. 2. *Omne malum ab aquilone.*

For, behold (thirdly) the issue and *consequent* of the ruine of *Babylon* was the returne of the captive Iewes from thence to Ierusalem, and renewing Covenant with him that had shewed such mercy on them, *vers.* 4. 5. For, *In those dayes, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Iudah together, going and weeping, they shall goe and seeke the Lord their God. They shall aske the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us joyne our selves to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant that shall not be forgotten.* They should goe, not so much to repossesse their ancient patrimony and inheritance, thereby to grow rich in the world, as to seeke and finde the Lord their God, and that with a resolution to enter into *Covenant* with him, Even such a Covenant as should never *be forgotten*, but daily remembred and carefully performed. 3.

You see the Context. Should I now divide the Text, I might shew you here. *Actus.*

¶ First, an *Act*, expressed by their industry, in setting upon a long and tedious journey to Zion. *They shall aske the way to Zion.*

Secondly, the *manner* how they mannage this journey, it is *Modus.*

1. With all *intention of spirit*, they aske the way to Zion, *with their faces thitherward.*
2. With fervent *charitie* towards, and mutuall *zeale* for each other, to quicken and inflame one another to the same dutie, *saying, Come,*

Thirdly, the end of their journey, which (with so much intention

Introduction. Finis.

of spirit and inflamed charity, calling and crying to one another in such a manner,) they set upon; all was for this: *Let us ioyne our selves to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant* that *shall not be forgotten.*

I might easily subdivide these generalls into many particulars, were it now a time to crumble a Text. But I shall not have time distinctly to prosecute all the parts already laid out: or rather (as the dutie of this day requireth) I shall bee inforced to insist upon that which is the maine, and bring in the other as subordinate thereunto, by occasion afterwards, in explication of the principall point. Wee see troopes in the Text bound for *Zion*; and, so hasty *thitherward*, that they *salute not any man by the way*, not so much as looke aside; they goe *With their faces thitherward*: all the stay they make, is but to call others along with them, and amongst those, us, saying, *Come.* And, what is the businesse; the end of all this hast? Nothing but this, *Let us ioyne our selves unto the Lord in an everlasting Covenant, &c.* This, how ever it were last in execution, yet was it first in their intention, in the undertaking of this journey: Vpon this therefore now shall I principally insist.

You see here a people loosed from the Babylonish captivitie, and returning to *Zion*: and, in their returne to have this chiefely in their hearts, mouthes, and indeavours; namely, upon the receipt of this mercy, to make speed to their God, to enter into a new Contract and solemne Covenant with him. So that the chiefe and onely point point of instruction which I shall hence recommend to, and presse upon you, and mine owne heart with you, is plainely this, that

The maine Observation, or Doctrine.

When God vouchsafes any deliverance to his Church, especially from Babylon, then is it most seasonable and most necessarie to Close with God by a more solemne, strict, and inviolable Covenant to be his, and onely his for ever.

In prosecuting this point (wherein I resolve to be plaine) I shall first shew you the ὅτι of it, *that it is so.* Next, the *κατὰ πῶς* (if you will) *how and in what manner* this must be done. Thirdly, the *διότι*, the *grounds* and reasons of it: and so proceed to the *Application.*

1. ὅτι. quod sit. That it is so. Proved.

For the first, the ὅτι *that it is so*, this will appeare, 1. More generally, upon receipt of any deliverance. 2. More specially, upon a deliverance from *Babylon* above all other.

1. More generally.

1. In generall, that this use must bee made of any deliverance, appeares both by precept, and example in holy Scripture. Wee shall carry them along together.

In

In *Deut.* 29. *Moses* requireth the people to enter into a *speciall Covenant* with God, *beside the solemne Covenant which hee made with with them (and they with him) in Horeb.* To induce them thereunto, *Moses* refresheth their memory with the repetition or representaon of the many deliverances God had given unto them, out of *Egypt*, and in the Wilderneſse by the ſpace of fortie yeeres, together with the wonders and miracles which hee daily wrought for them. And in the ſeventh *ver.* hee tells them, that *when yee came into this place* (that is, into *the Land of Moab*) *Sihon the King of Hesbbon, & Og the King of Bashan, came out againſt us unto battell, &c.* Here is deliverance upon deliverance, and the inference is, *Keepe therefore the Words of this Covenant, and doe them*, verſe 9 But, that is the Covenant on Gods part, you will ſay? True, but that is not all. Hee therefore preſſeth them to an actuall perſonall Covenant on their parts, and that upon conſideration of ſo many deliverances. This was his maine buſineſse with them at the Lords owne command. Therefore in verſe 10. hee thus beſpeakes them, *Yee ſtand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your Captaines of your tribes, your Elders, and your Officers, with all the men of Iſrael, your little ones, your Wives, and thy ſtranger that is in thy Campe, from the hewer of thy Wood to the drawer of thy Water, that thou ſhouldſt enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.* And in verſ. 14. he addeth. *Neither with you onely doe I make this Covenant, and this oath, but with him that ſtandeth here With us this day before the Lord our God, and alſo with him that is not here with us this day.* Thus you ſee a Covenant required, ſtricken, and ratified by ſolemne Oath of God and his people mutually to one another: they binde themſelves by Oath to him, as he by Oath had bound himſelfe to them. Thus then it was in the time of *Moses*, No eminent deliverance went before, but a ſolemne Covenant followed after. * And, To ſweare a Covenant, is no new device, no humane invention, nor arbitrary Action.

1 *That it is ſo, in the generall.*

Exod. 19 5. &c

The firſt ſolemne Covenant which they paſſed into, was after their deliverance out of Egypt. Verſ. 1.

A ſecond Covenant, about fortie yeeres after the firſt, when they came neere to Canaan, and ſhortly after were to enter into it.

* As Moſes drew the people into a Covenant before their entrance into Canaan; ſo did Ioſhua alſo, after they were poſſeſſed of it, Ioſh 24. 25, 26. So did Iehojada, upon the deliverance of Iudah from the tyranny of That bloody monſter Athaliah, 2 Kin. 11. 17.

I will give you but one inſtance more (among many) of this kind, and it is that of *Asa*, that good and religious King of *Iudah*. When *Zerah* the Ethiopian invaded his kingdome with an huge army, even 1000000. and 300. Chariots, 2 *Chron.* 14. *Asa* falls to praying, God heard him; they joyned battell, *Asa* obtained the victory and *carried away very much ſpoile.* What was the iſſue? Another *Covenant.*

1. *That it is so, in the generall.*

2 King 11. 17.

2 Chron 14.

For, in *Chap.* 5. God presently upon this addresseth a Prophet to *Asa*, (*Azariah* the sonne of *Oded*) to tell him and the people. *The Lord is With you while ye be With him.* And to encourage them to close with God, he addes, in *vers.* 7. *Be ye strong therefore, and let your hands be Weake: for your worke shall be rewarded.* They must not onely worke for God, but be *strong* in it, and that they might be so, there was no way like to that of entring *Covenant* with him. For so *Asa* understood it, as appeareth by the next words, where it is said, *Asa, when he heard these Words tooke courage*; and although he had before done much in purging the Cities of Iudah of Idolatry, and Idolls, of high places, Images, and groves, yet now hee goes on to a more thorough reformation and *put aWay* the remainder of *abominable Idolls, out of all the land of Iudah and Beniamin, and out of the Cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim, and reneWed the Altar of the Lord*; for ever where Idolls go up, Gods Altars goe downe; therefore hee pulled downe the one, and renewed the other.

And not this alone but he offered unto the Lord a great *sacrifice*, and both himselfe and his people *entered into a Covenant to seeke the Lord God of their fathers, With all their heart, and With all their soule, that whosoever would not seeke the Lord God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, Whether man or Woman; and they sware unto the Lord With a loud voice and With shouting, and With trumpets, and With Cornets.* And all this, immediately, upon the deliverance and victorie which he had obtained: for, in *vers.* 11. it is said expressely, that *they offered unto the Lord the same time* (or, *in that very day*) *of the spoile which they had brought, 700. Oxen, and 7000. Sheepe*; meaning of those which they had carried away from the Ethiopians that came out against them, and were vanquished by them.

Thus you see another solemne *Covenant* entred into, not by *Asa* alone but by all the people of God, a Covenant solemnized in publick by *Sacrifice*, by *Oath* and under the highest penaltie, *death* it self to all that should not observe it.

In pursuit of which Covenant, see what presently he did: he spared not his owne Mother that regarded it not. For when he perceived that, notwithstanding this Covenant the Queene his mother *Maacha* would needs retaine her puppet Gods still, and (amongst the rest) one abominable Idoll in a grove so obscene as was

not

not fit to bee named (*Abulensis* [a] observeth that it was *Priapus*, and conjectureth thence, that shee was not onely a grosse Idolatresse, but an abominable strumpet: for, ordinarily, [b] Idolatry and adultery, spirituall and bodily fornication goe together.) It is said, that *hee removed her from being Queene, because shee had made an Idol in a grove, and Asa cut downe her Idol, and stampt it, and burnt it at the brooke Kidron, verse* 16. Which passage is exprest with an emphasis in 1 *King*. 15. 11. *Also Maacha his Mother, even Her, he removed from being Queene.* Although a *Queene*, although a *Mother*, * yet *even her* he deposed from her dignity.

This he did, and this hee must doe, not onely by reason of that voluntary Covenant into which hee had entred, but by vertue of the speciall Command of God himselfe, in what ever relation shee had stood unto him. So, in *Deut*. 13. 6. The law was: for though shee had beene neerer than a Mother, even the *Wife of his bosome*, yet if shee were an Idolater, and should *entise him secretly, saying, let us goe and serve other Gods*, shee must have *beene put to death*, and *his owne hand must have beene first upon her*, vers. 9.

You now see the point proved in the generall, that thus it is with Gods people; upon any notable deliverance, " they enter anew into *solemne* and strict *Covenant* with God.

2. But more especially ought this to bee the care of the Church, when God gives her deliverance out of *Babylon*, whose servitude of all other was most heavy, and lay longest on her. See this in some instances, both on Gods part ayming at this in giving deliverance, and on his peoples part performing this after deliverance from *Babylon*.

On Gods part, first, This was foreshewed under the similitude of the basket of *good figs*, Ier. 24 5. There it is said by *the Lord, the God of Israel, like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Iudah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good: for I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and will bring them againe to this land, &c.* And, in the seventh verse it followeth, *I will give them an heart to know mee, that I am the Lord, and I will be their God: for they shall returne unto me with their whole heart.* He will give them an heart to *know* him, to returne and

1. *That it is so, in the gonnall.*

[a] In 3. Reg. 15. 13. 11. The Vulgar hath it in the Text, ne, esset Princeps in Sacris Priapi yea, Lyra is peremptory for this in loc.

[b] Hom. against peril of Idol. par. 3. Rom. 1. 21, 22, 23. 24. &c. Wis. 14. 24 &c. to ver. 28. Minut. Fælix in Octavio. Athan. orat. cont. Idol. Tertul. in apolog. c. 15. B. Hall. contemp. in Asa Lorinus in Levit. 18 p. 536. Idem in Num. 16 pa. 572. Aliiq; complures.

* Some suppose her to have beene his Grandmother, others say she was his owne Mother, of the same name with his Grandmother, which is more probable.

" Yea sometimes upon consideration of Gods Iudgements felt or feared, 2 Chron. 29. 10. 2 Chron. 34. 31, 32. 2. *In speciall.*

become

1 *That it is so, in speciall.*

become his people, which cannot bee without a *Covenant*. Againe, That God's heart is fully set upon this, namely never to bring his people backe from *Babylon*, but upon this very condition, will yet further appeare by other passages of the Prophet *Ieremy*; to passe by sundry other Propheſies of *Isaiah*, *Micah*, and others.

In *Ier.* 30. verſ. 18. Wee ſhall find a Propheſie, that this ſhould bee done, (and I ſhall ſhew, by and by, that it was afterwards performed) *Behold*, ſaith the Lord, *I will bring againe the captivitie of Iacobs tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places, &c.* and in verſe 21. *I will cauſe him to draw neere, and hee ſhall approach unto me*; and then, as one aſſured of it, and admiring at it, hee preſently addes, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto mee, ſaith the Lord?* That is, both Governour and people, all of them ſhould binde and engage themſelves, (not their outward man alone, but even their very heart and ſoule alſo) by ſolemne Covenant to bee the Lords. That this was the meaning, is cleare by the next verſe, *Yee ſhall bee my people, and I will bee your God.* For it was ſuch an *engaging of their hearts*, as that *one ſhould ſay, I am the Lords*; *and another ſhall call himſelfe by the name of Iacob: and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſirname himſelfe by the name of Iſrael, Iſa.* 44. 5.

Verſ. 31. &c.

So in *Ier.* 31. The Lord having firſt promiſed to bring backe the captivitie, hee ſubjoynes; *Behold, The daies come, ſaith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Iudah: not according to the Covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I tooke him out of the Land of Egypt, which my Covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them ſaith the Lord. But this ſhall bee the Covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael*; *after thoſe dayes ſaith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.* Here is a Covenant: God begins the worke, but his people follow; they imbrace it, and joyne themſelves by mutuall covenant to him. He puts his Law into their hearts, for this very purpoſe.

Once more. In *Ier.* 32. 37. there is a promiſe that God would gather his people out of all Countries whither hee had caſt them in his wrath, and bring them backe to their owne place, and cauſe them to dwell ſafely. Hee preſently addes this, as the product of that mercy; *They ſhall bee my people, and I will bee their God, and I*

will

will give them one heart, and one way, that they may feare me for ever, &c. I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turne away from them to do them good, but I will put my feare in their hearts that they ſhall not depart from me: Which words goe no leſſe than a ſolemne Covenant mutually made and ſtrucken betweene GOD and His people. 1 That it is ſo, in ſpeciall.

Thus many plaine and pregnant places of Scripture ſhew, that the maine thing God on his part aymed at, and expected from his people in delivering them from *Babylon*, was, the firme and ſolemne tying and engaging of them by a formall and effectuall Covenant to him, and and their *remembring* and keeping of it better than they had formerly done.

But, ſecondly, all theſe were but propheſies ſhewing what ſhould be. Will you therefore ſee the thing acted, and all theſe promiſes fulfilled? True it is the people entred not into ſuch a ſolemne Covenant ſo ſoone as deliverance was by *Cyrus* proclaimed; and they ſped accordingly. *Zorobabell* went indeed before, in the firſt yeere of *Cyrus*, and laid the foundation of the Lords Houſe: but wee read of no Covenant then made.

Then comes *Ezra*, and makes ſome reformation of manners; and not onely ſo, but ſome Covenant he and the people entred into, *Ezra* 10. But that was but in a particular caſe; there were many that had treſpaſſed againſt their God by taking ſtrange wives of the people of the Land that worſhipped not the ſame God, ſuch as were duely touched with the ſence of this ſinne, deſire *Ezra* that a ſolemne *Covenant* might then bee made with God, *to put away all* ſuch *wives, and ſuch as were borne of them*, Verſ. 3. Now in the fift verſe, wee ſhall finde this executed. For *Ezra aroſe, and made the chiefe Prieſts, the Levites, and all Iſrael to ſweare that they ſhould doe according to this Word, and they ſware.*

This was ſomewhat, but not enough: a partiall Covenant, and ſuch as came ſhort of that intended in my Text. Therefore ſee it more throughly performed afterwards, in *Nehemiahs* time. For, after *Ezra*, came *Nehemiah*, and hee makes a more thorough Reformation; not of manners onely, but of Religion alſo. Hee ſet up the Ordinances of God in their puritie, and tooke care in particular for the preaching of the Word. After all this, hee and all the people entred into a ſolemne Covenant, and that at a Faſt. And this

1 *That it is so, in speciall.*

brings it home to the businesse wee are now about. For, as they entred into Covenant upon receipt of such a deliverance, so they did it at the time of a solemne Fast. This will appeare throughout the whole ninth Chapter of *Nehemiah*, where it is first said, that *the Children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sack-cloth, and with earth upon them: they separated themselves from strangers, they stood and confessed their sinnes, and the iniquities of their fathers.* They justified God in all his proceedings against them, and in all the evils he had brought upon them. They acknowledged that neither they, their Princes, people, nor fathers had kept the Law, nor served God in that kingdome hee had bestowed upon them. *Behold*, say they, vers. 36. *We are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eate the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold wee are servants in it, And it yeeldeth much increase unto the Kings whom thou hast set over us, because of our sinnes: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattell at their pleasure, and wee are in great distresse. And because of all this, we make a sure Covenant, and write it, and our Princes, Levites, and Priests seale unto it.*

Now here is the full accomplishment of all, what in the Text is set downe by way of Prophesie you here see acted in the History. And if you looke into the tenth Chapter, you shall find who sealed this Covenant: first, the Princes, the Officers, the Magistrates of the Kingdome; (the *Parliament men*, if you will so call them;) and then the rest of the people. And what is the substance of their Covenant? They *entred into a curse, and into an Oath, to walke in Gods Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and doe all the Commandments of the Lord their God, and his Iudgements, and Statutes*, vers. 29.

Here is their Covenant, and you see with what solemnitie it was made and ratified; by *subscribing* of *hands*, and setting to of their *Seales*, by an *Oath*, and by a *curse*; binding themselves by all the most solemne and strongest bonds that possible they could; and all this in in Publique, and at a *Publique Fast*. So that now the point is cleare, *That it is so*, and that the practise of Gods people hath ever beene, upon any great deliverance, especially from *Babylon*, to enter into solemne Covenant with the Lord.

2. Καθὼς, *Quomodo sit.* How this is to be done.

Come we to the second branch propounded, which is the καθὼς, shewing

shewing, *in what manner* this Covenant must be made, and *how* men are to joyne themselves to the Lord in this Action. 2. *How it is to.*

This I shall demonstrate out of the bowels of the Text it selfe: for therein some what is required, 1. By way of *disposition* or *preparation* to it. 2. In respect of the *substance* of it. 3. In regard of the *properties* belonging to it. These being opened, I shall give you a full view of this Text according to my promise before made unto you. In a threefold respect.

The first thing to bee unfolded is, the *disposition* or *preparation* to the *Covenant*; and this appeares in two things, 1. In seeking seriously the face of God, *They shall aske the Way to Zion.* 2. In the manner of their addresse unto him, *With their faces thitherward*, saying, *Come.* 1. of the disposition requisite to strike a Covenant with God.

The first thing requisite to *dispose*, qualifie, and prepare men to strike a Covenant with God, is a serious and humble seeking of the face of God. *They shall aske the way to Zion.* And here, first, a word of the place toward which they were bound; secondly, of their contending and repaire to it, under that expression of *asking the Way* thither. Whereunto is required 1. the asking the way to Zion.

The *place* was *Zion*, where first (though it be but a Criticisme, it is yet not unnecessary to bee taken notice of, because the word is often pronounced, and written alike, which may cause ambiguitie touching the place) you must put a difference betweene *Sihon* or *Sion* and *Zion*: (for these were two different places, and are written in the originall with two different Letters, the former with שׂ, שִׂיאֹן the other with צ) you must not here understand this, of the former, צִיּוֹן namely, of *Mount Sihon*, which is all one with *Hermon*, situate in the uttermost confines of Israel North-East-ward, neare unto Iordan, (*Deut.* 4.48.) but conceive it to bee meant of *Zion* in Hierusalem, which was once the strong hold of the Iebusites, and held out longer unsubdued than any Peece belonging to that people. For when Israel under the Conduct of *Ioshua* had conquered *Iebus* (after called *Hierusalem*) yet could they not winne *Zion* in it. *Zion* was a strong Castle or Fort, erected upon a rocky mount, toward the South-west part of the Citie, overlooking all the rest; and that the Iebusites (having abundantly fortified and victualled it) still held all the daies of *Ioshua*. and long after, albeit the Israelites possessed the rest of the Citie, *Iosh.* 15.63. But afterwards when *David* came a-

2. *How this is to be done.*

gainst it, even that *strong hold* (which the Iebusites thought to bee so invincible, that, in scorne of him and his siege, they set up onely a few blinde and lame people on the walles to defend it) hee conquered and called it *the Citie of David*, because after hee had wonne it, himselfe dwelt in it, 2 *Samuel* 5. *vers.* 7. This for the place.

Then you must know further, that, by *Zion* is sometimes meant the whole Citie of *Ierusalem*, by a *Synechdoche*; sometimes it was taken for the place of Gods worship in the Holy Citie, or rather with reference to his Worship and presence there: for that Citie being the Capitall Citie of the Kingdome, where Thrones were set for judgement, was also the speciall place which God chose to place his name in: there were the Altars placed for Gods worship, and *thither the Tribes went up to worship*, because there God pleased to manifest his more speciall presence, and to *command the blessing for evermore*. Thither therefore these returning Captives repaired, even unto *Zion*, the *Watch Towre*, as Saint *Ierome* interprets it, whence God in speciall manner watched over his people, for Good: there they seeke his face, and enquire of him, before they presume to enter Covenant with him.

* from שׁאל to *bejeech*, or *pray*.

Now, their addresse to this place, is set forth in this Text, by *asking the way to Zion*. The word שׁאלו though it sometimes import the demanding of a thing which is a point of justice or equitie to give, (as Gen. 34. 14.) yet is it usually applyed to note the seeking of some thing by humble prayers and intreaties: so as it is not seldome put for prayer it selfe, 2 *Chron.* 20. 4. and sometimes for an earnest and humble enquirie after some thing wee know not, (*Num.* 27. 21. *Deut* 13. 14.) that wee may bee directed aright, and pursue the direction with effect: so here, They *aske the way to Zion*, and that of God, not onely *to seeke of him a right way for them* by fasting and and prayer, *Ezra* 8. 21. but, as resolving to walke in it, and to *appeare before God in Zion*. For, so much is intended here, as is expressed more fully in *Isay* 2. 2, 3. *Mic.* 4. 1, 2. where they not onely call on each other to undertake, but they also performe the journey, *going up to the mountaine of the Lord*. So the Prophet *Zachary*, the inhabitants of one *Citie shall goe to another, saying, Let us goe speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seeke the Lord of Hosts, &c.* And how goe they? not proudly, but in all humilitie, yea, (as in the verse before my Text)

Zac. 8 21. 22.

even

even with *weeping*, that is, with deepe humiliation and godly sorrow for all those sinnes whereby they had formerly broken his covenant, and for which hee had entred upon the forfeiture, and laid those heavy afflictions upon their Loines. The very same thing was foretold before (to shew the necessitie of the dutie) touching Israel. *Ier.* 31. 9. *They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I leade them.* So then, this is the first thing to dispose and prepare men for the Covenant; namely, to *aske the way* to *Zion*, by a serious, humble, affectionate inquiring, and seeking after God in his Ordinances, even with many prayers and teares, that he would be pleased to accept them.

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Secondly, the *manner* of their addresse is as necessary as the former. It is not every *manner* that will serve their turne. It must bee done with all *intention* of spirit in regard of themselves, and with *fervent Charitie* towards others. For, they must aske the way to Zion *with their faces thitherward, saying, Come.*

2. In regard of the manner. That is, 1. With intention of spirit. * ἐκλίνω δὲ καὶ κεῖ ἀκρ χείλη ὦ, καὶ οὐκέτι διέσω κάμπτειν καὶ πάλιν. I will no longer turne aside hither, and thither, and goe about their villages and Cities, *Tit. Bost.* in *Luc.* 9.

Their *intention and fervency of spirit* wherewith they set upon this worke, is set forth under that Hebraisme of asking the way to Zion *With their faces thitherward.* This phrase is usually an expression of the greatest intention, fervency, and contention of mind that can bee, in the pursuit of any businesse on foot, or of any way wherein a man is going. Such a phrase you have in *Luke* 9. 51. where it is said of Christ, *that hee stedfastly set his face to goe to Hierusalem*, or, *as if hee would goe to Hierusalem*: for which cause the Samaritanes *would not receive him*, vers. 53. that is, they would not entertaine him with any respect, because, that *stedfast setting of his face* towards Ierusalem * manifested, by his very countenance and aspect, that, where ever his body was, his heart was at Hierusalem (which the Samaritanes could not brooke) and that nothing in the world could take him off from that journey, or, so farre prevaile with him, as to make him linger, or loyter; no entreaties, feare, shame, nor any thing could stay him, but *obstinata & imperterrita mente locum petiit*, as it is expresst by *Bede*. Hee was no way afraid, or ashamed to be seene and knowne whither he was bound, and what he was going about.

When therefore it is said, they shall aske the way to Zion *With their faces thitherward*, the thing meant thereby, is, that they shall set upon this worke with their whole heart, with their whole man, without any feare, shame, or unwillingnesse to owne the businesse: they shall do it thoroughly and affectionately without wavering,

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lingring, halting: they shall doe it boldly, presently, openly, indefatigably and continually. In a word, whatsoever can bee said, or thought to set forth the utmost intention of a mans Spirit in any worke that his heart is most set upon, and that hee would lay out his life and all hee hath for the accomplishment of it; that was the resolution, and care of these people. and must bee ours: this is to aske the way to Zion *with our faces thitherward.* And without this, no entring into Covenant with God, This is, for substance no other (though otherwise expressed) than that of the people in *Asa* his time, when they sware the Covenant before mentioned, 2 *Chronicles* 15. where it is said, they did it *With all their heart, and with all their soule*, and expresst it by the *loudnesse* of their *voices*, and *with shoutings, &c. reioycing at the Oath, because they had sworne with all their hearts, and sought him With their whole desire, verse.* 15. Men that will stand disputing, consulting with flesh and blood, and casting about how the entring into such a Covenant may consist with their profits, pleasures, lusts, designes, &c. are no fit *Covenanters* for *God. His people shall bee willing, Psal.* 110. 3. their heart, mind, spirit, body, countenance, all, shall professe, and proclaime this to the whole world, that they are for God, for a *Covenant*, for putting themselves into the strongest bonds that can possibly bee thought on, to bind them hand and foote, soule and body to the Lord for ever.

2. With charitie towards others.

2. Nor is this all For, the men in my Text, content not themselves to be thus earnestly addicted to the worke in their owne persons; but, (as one sticke kindles another) they desire to raise the same flame of affection in others also, and mutually to blow up the Coales in one another, *saying, Come.*

This notes the *fervency* of their *Charitie* towards others, For, 'tis not here a formalitie, or complement, but the evidence of a strong desire to draw as many as they can to the same journey, and (if it bee possible) to keepe the same pace with them, as being most unwilling to leave any behind them. This indeede is true Love, unfained Charitie, to draw all wee can along with us unto God. True Converts, when once they returne themselves, *They cause others to returne* also. And this was often propheſied as a thing which should certainely bee: Witnesse, *Isay* 2. *Mic.* 4. and *Zach.* 8. before quoted. So then, all these things are requisite, and *previous* to the Act of Covenanting with God. A seeking to God with true Humiliation, a seeking

seeking of him with all intention of spirit, and with all manifestations of a resolution not to bee terrified from, daunted at, or ashamed of the worke: yea, with fervent Charitie to draw others into the same Covenant also. Thus much for the disposition preparatory to the Covenant. 2. How this is to be done.

2. The next thing is the *Substance* of the Covenant. *Let us ioyne our selves to the Lord in a Covenant.* 2. the substance of the Covenant. Both in respect

Two things here must bee opened; the *matter*, and the *forme* of this solemne action.

1. The *matter* of it is set forth under this expression, *Let us ioyne our selves to Lord.* The originall word נִלְוֶה (from לָוָה, is very emphaticall; so as the word being explained, will sufficiently set out before you the nature of the Covenant here intended. Some Translators render it, *Let us glue our selves unto the Lord*; which imports a conjunction so neare, as nothing can come betweene; and so firme, as nothing can dissolve. But the Verbe here used is in Scripture more usually applyed to denote two things; both of which being set together, will fully discover what it is to bee *ioyned to the Lord in Covenant.* 1. Of the matter.

First, it signifieth the binding of a mans selfe to the Vsurer, of whom hee hath borrowed money, to pay both in principall and interest. So it is used in *Nehem.*5.4. where the people complaine, *Wee have borrowed money, * for the Kings tribute, and that upon our Lands and Vineyards.* That is, they had engaged both Lands and Vineyards for securitie of the money borrowed, so as the Vsurer might enter upon all, in case they failed of Payment at the day. So that, as men, to make sure, will have a *Statute Staple*, or a *Recognisance in the nature of a Statute Staple*, acknowledged, whereby a mans person, goods, lands, and all, are bound for the securitie of the Creditors principall and interest, verifying that of *Salomon * The borrower is servant to the lender*: for, hee hath nothing left to his owne disposo; if hee would sell any land, settle any joyncture, there is a *Statute* upon it, hee can dispose of nothing till that bee taken off; So it is in the case of any man joyning himselfe to the Lord by Covenant, hee must even bind himselfe to God as firmely and fully, as the poore borrower who for his necessitie taketh up money, binds himselfe to the Vsurer. If God lend him any mercy, and blessing, hee binds himselfe to restore not onely the principall (the blessing it selfe) when

* לוה נפש

* Prov.22.7.

2. How this is to be done.

when God shall call call for it; but even the interest too; I meane, all possible homage, service, and honour which becomes those who have received so great a benefit.

This is more than implyed in that parable of our Saviour touching the talents dispensed; *Matth.* 25. 27. for even to him who had received but one talent, was it said, *Thou oughtest to have put my money to the Exchangers, that at my comming I might have received mine owne with usury.* So God lookes for some interest, for every mercy; and expects a *Statute Staple*, that is, a Covenant, for his better securitie. God will have every man bonnd to him, in soule, body, estate, life and all; so as all hee is, and hath, shall be forfeited, if hee doe not keepe touch, and make payment according to the agreement and Covenant made betweene them. This is the first use of the word, *Nilvu.*

Secondly, there is yet more in it. For, though it bee true that the obligation of a borrower to the Vsurer be as strong as bonds and Statutes can make it; yet, there is not such an entire, everlasting tye of the borrower to the Lender, nor such a thorough interest in the whole estate of the Vsurer thereby, as there is of him that is in Covenant with God. The Vsurer, though hee bind the poore borrower fast, yet hee keepes him at distance, not giving him interest in, or use of any other part of his estate, but onely of the summe borrowed. But now this *joyning of our selves to the Lord*, is such, as is made by *marriage*, and binds us unto him for ever; but withall, it is a blessed knot, for it gives us interest in all that the Lord is, and hath, and admits us to the participation of the most intimate, neerest, choysest expressions of the deerest Love of God in a spirituall manner, which is or can bee found betweene the husband and the wife, who are *joyned* together by the bond of marriage, and made one flesh.

So the word is used, *Gen.* 29. 34. where *Leah*, being delivered of her third sonne, *Levi*, thus saith to the women about her, *Now this time will my husband bee joyned * unto mee, because I have borne him three sonnes.* That is, now shall my husband bee more arctly united to mee in all love, and in all demonstrations of it, and that in the most free, full, and intimate way of expression that possibly can passe betweene those who are coupled together in so neere a relation.

אישי * צרילות

So then, lay both these together, and you have a cleare view of this

this *joyning of our selves to the Lord* by Covenant. He that enters into Covenant with God, doth not onely bind himselfe, as the needy *borrower* to the Covetous Vsurer, for a *time*; but, as the *Wife* to the *Husband*, to be *wholly his for ever*, without any reservation, limitation, or termination, till death dissolve the bond. As the wife hath interest in the goods, estate, and person of the husband; and all that hee hath is hers: so by this *joyning of our selves to the Lord*, Hee becomes ours, as well as wee become his, and both are mutually conjoyned to each other by an indissoluble bond for ever. All the power, wisedome, goodnesse, mercy, grace, glory, that the great God hath to communicate to the creature, is now assured and made over to every soule that thus engageth himselfe unto him. And on the other side, all the wit, strength, industry, wealth, honour, friends, life, and all that this man hath, hee makes over, and resignes up actually, totally, absolutely, and for ever unto the Lord, to serve and honour him withall; and that with all his heart, and with his whole desire; to have nothing, to doe nothing, to bee nothing but for the Lord, though all the world be against him for it. This I take to bee the full latitude of the *Covenant*, for the *Matter* of it. 1. *How this is to be done.*

2, Touching the *forme* of this Act of *joyning our selves to the Lord* it is expressed in the word ברית the *Covenant*. A Covenant is nothing else but an agreement or bargaine betweene two or moe persons, and ratified (ordinarily) by some externall solemnitie, or rites that may testifie and declare the agreement, whereby it becomes unalterable. Therefore it is, that among the varietie of ratifications of Covenants mentioned in Scripture, still there is somewhat of outward solemnitie reported to have beene used at the making of them, to strike the bargaine thorough. 2. In regard of the forme.

Sometimes they were made by *Sacrifice*, *Psalme* 50 5. sometimes by *Oath*, *Deut.* 29. sometimes by an *Oath*, and a *curse*, *Neh.* 10. 29. sometimes by *subscription* of their hands, sometimes by *sealing* it with their seales also: sometimes by all these, and by what ever else might most firmely and inviolably knit men unto God. And as it was then, so must it bee still. To strike a Covenant, is not, in a private or publike prayer onely, to goe to God and say, *Lord I will bee thine, I here enter into a Covenant with thee, be thou a witnesse of it, &c.* but it is, to stand and make it *publiquely* before the Lord, by some Isa. 44 5. Neh 9. ult.

2. *How this is to be done.*

* 2 Cro. 34. 31

speciall *solemnitie* that may *witnesse* it to all the world, as *Iosiah*, * *Asa* and all the godly ever did; (even as in entring into bonds, or as in solemnizing of matrimony, men use to doe.) Whether by the Sacrament of the *Lords Supper*, by *fasting*, or by ought else, whereby they may become so firmely and arctly joyned to the Lord, that they may not onely bee no longer *sui juris* to depart away from the living God; but, not so much as to sit loose from God, or to stand in any termes of indifferency, which might leave them at libertie to serve, or not to serve God in any dutie, how difficult, or dangerous soever. And thus have you the substance of the Covenant opened.

3. The properties of the Covenant, which are two.

3. Take wee now a short view of the *properties* of this Covenant, and they are two; *perpetuitie* and *heedfulnesse*.

1. It must bee an *everlasting Covenant*, in regard of continuance. In the Originall it is ברית עולם *a Covenant of Ages*. And the 72. *Interpreters* render it to to the same purpose, διαθήκη αἰώνιος, that is, such a Covenant as no time shall terminate, till they who make it cease to bee. Some understand this of engaging themselves to sticke close to him in the due celebration of his Legall worship, so long as hee should continue it in his Church, (which was, till *Shiloh* came) without those mixtures, wherein formerly they had beene too bold, and for which God hath spewed them out of his Church, and hurled them as farre as Babylon. Others conceive it to bee meant of the *Covenant of Grace* that God had sealed to them in the bloud of his Sonne. But, neither of these are full. For, it is clearely meant of an *Act* of *theirs* towards *God*, whereby they bind themselves to him, and that not for a definite time onely, but for ever.

1. It must be everlasting for continuance.

It is such a binding, as that of the borrower to the Vsurer, whom nothing can satisfie but full payment. Or rather, such a closing with God, as is that of the wife to the husband, called, in particular reference to the nuptiall knot, *the Covenant of her God*, *Proverbs* 2. 17. Shee must be his for ever; that is, *so long as shee liveth*, *Rom.* 7. So that for men to bind themselves by an everlasting *Covenant* to the Lord, is to bind themselves never to step out from him to Idols, to their base lusts, to any creature, in any strait, upon any occasion, or tentation whatsoever; nor, with the dogge, to returne any more to their vomit of any kinde. They are in Covenant as the wife to the husband; for they are *married unto the Lord for ever*, *Hos.* 2.

2. It

2. It must bee *heeded* and *minded*; else, it will bee to small purpose to bee so *lasting*. It must bee a Covenant *that shall not bee forgotten*. 2. *How this is to be done.* 2. It must be heeded and not forgotten.

A Covenant, *quod non tradetur oblivioni*; as *Tremellius* well: that is, that shall not be *cast behind their backes*. It is but a plaine mockery for men so to enter Covenant with God, as young Gallants enter into bonds to the Vsurer, never thinking more of them, till the day of payment be past, and the Sergeant ready to attach them. *Vnto the wicked saith God, What hast thou to doe to take my Covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou castest my words behind thee?* Psalme 50. Onely they rightly performe this dutie, who so joyne themselves to the Lord, as to *remember* and *minde* the obligation they have sealed. As a poore man that meanes honestly, if hee be necessitated to take up money upon his bond, hee can hardly eate, walke, sleepe, doe any thing, be in any company, but that still his minde runs upon the obligation and day of payment: hee complaines hee is in debt, hee hath given bond for so much money, and all his care is how to pay his debts, or to get longer time; so it is with a Godly man that hath entred Covenant with the Lord, he hath sealed a bond, and hee knowes it must be satisfied, or it will be put in suit. Therefore hee *beares it in minde*, hee is alwayes casting about how hee may performe, and keepe touch with God. *I will will never forget thy precepts*, saith *David*, *I have inclined mine heart to performe thy Statutes alwayes, even unto the end*, Psal. 119. 112. This is one expression.

Againe, It is a Covenant to bee *remembred*, as that of the *wife*, whereby shee stands bound to her *husband*: she must ever remember it. It is the note of an Harlot to *forget the Covenant of her* God, The chaste wife will so *remember* the marriage bond, that if shee be solicited to unfaithfulnesse, to uncleanesse, &c. shee ever hath this in her thoughts, that she hath given her selfe wholly away to an husband, and is bound to keep her onely unto him during life; and this makes her to bee even an impregnable wall against all assaults that might otherwise draw her to folly. So must it be in the case in hand: The Covenant must still be in the *heart*, and in the *memory*. In every action of a mans life, in every passage and turning of his estate and condition, in every designe or engagement, *this* must *not be forgotten*; viz. "I have entred into Covenant with God, as a wife with her "husband; will that I am now doing, or going about, stand with Prov. 2. 17.

2 *How this is to be done.*

my Covenant? Is this to performe Covenant with God? &c. If hee be solicited to uncleannesse, to fraud, oppression, any evill whatsoever, this still runs in his minde, There is a Covenant betweene mee and the Lord, I am bound from such courses by the strongest bonds; *How then can I commit this great wickednesse, and sinne against God?*

Psal 78. 10.

What was it for which *Iudah*, and *Israel* became *Captives*, but the breach of the Covenant? *They kept not the Covenant of God*, saith the Psalmist. And, how so? because they did *not remember* it. As *they soone forgot his workes*, so it was not long ere they *forgot God their Saviour* himselfe too, and then no marvaile, if, at the next bout, they forgot his *Covenant* also, *Psal.* 106. Hee then, that would not *breake* Covenant, must *not forget* it; but *mind*, and performe it. Otherwise, it is like *vowing unto God, and not paying*, whichis worse than *not to vow* at all.

Eccles. 5.

Thus have I dispatcht the Second *generall*, the καθότι, and shewed you *how* and *in what manner* this Covenant must be striken: first, in regard of the *disposition and preparation* of the Soule unto it, it must be with *serious seeking* the face of God and humbling the soule before hand; it must be with all *intention* and *earnestnesse*, with fervent *Love* and *charitie* to draw others the same way. *Next*, in regard of the *Covenant* it selfe, it must be an *act and firme joyning* and *binding* our selves to the Lord, as of the *borrower* to the *Lender*; of the *wife* to the *husband*; and that by some *solemne Act*, which may *testifie* it to all the world, and be a *witnesse* against us, if wee keepe it not. And all this, thirdly for *properties*, must be of *everlasting continuance*, and had in *continuall remembrance*, so it may be continually performed of all that make it.

3. διότι. *cur sit.* The grounds why it is so: these are of 2. sorts, viz.

3. I proceed to the third and last branch, the διότι, the *Grounds* and *reasons why*, upon receit of *any deliverance*, but more especially from *Babylon*, people should enter into such a covenant with God. And these respect deliverances either in *generall*, or from *Babylon* in *speciall*.

1. The reasons why this must be done, upon *any deliverance*, in generall, are these.

1. God at such times gives clearest evidence of his readinesse to enter Covenant with us.

1. Because God, at no time so much as when hee bestowes upon his people some notable deliverance, gives such cleere hints and demonstrations of his willingnesse to strike an everlasting Covenant with them. No sooner had the Lord delivered Israel out of Egypt, but

but within 3. Moneths after, he commanded *Moſes* to tell the people from him; *Ye have ſeene what I did unto the Egyptians; and how I bare you on Eagles Wings, and brought you out unto my ſelfe. Now therefore if ye will obey my voyce and keepe my Covenant, then yee ſhall bee a peculiar treaſure unto me above all people*, Exod. 19. 1. and *verſe* 4, 5. God himſelfe, you ſee was now earneſt for a *Covenant*. 1 *Way, for any deliverance in generall.*

It is the nature of God, where hee beſtowes one benefit, to adde moe, and ſtill to riſe in his bleſſings. Where hee once opens his hand to take a people into his protection, hee opens his heart to take them into his *boſome*. Where he puts forth his *power* to *reſcue* a people, hee puts out his heart to make them *his owne*, if then they have eyes to diſcerne the opportunitie. See this moſt excellently demonſtrated *Ier.* 32. from *ver.* 37. to the 42. His gathering them from their *Captivitie*, firſt warmes, then melts, and after inflames his heart towards them, making it even then to glow as it were upon them, and to become reſtleſſe till he have beſtowed himſelfe wholly on them by ſolemne *Covenant* to be their God for ever.

Now then, ſhall God, at ſuch a time, bee ſo willing and deſirous to enter Covenant with men, and ſhall they thinke it too much for them to be in Covenant with him? Shall hee be faſt bound to them, and they left free to ſit looſe from him? Indeed, this is that which our corrupt nature would willingly have: people would faine bee their owne men: which yet in truth, is, to bee the greateſt ſlaves. Neceſſary therefore it is for men, upon receipt of *any deliverance*, to renew Covenant with God who is pleaſed to honour them ſo farre, as to be in Covenant with them. For, theſe two are relatives, and ever goe together, *I Will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.* God is not the God of any people but of his owne Covenant-Servants. The reſt, he ſtiles, *Lo-ammi*, Hoſ. 1. 9. *for yee are not my people*, ſaith he, *and I Will be not your God.* They will not enter into Covenant with me, and I will make no Covenant with them. That is the firſt reaſon.

2. As God is pleaſed to enter into Covenant with his people, ſo is hee *firſt* in the Covenant, God requires no man to binde himſelfe by Covenant to Him, till the Lord firſt ſtrike a Covenant with his Soule. As *Wee love him, becauſe hee loved us firſt*; ſo wee enter into Covenant with him, becauſe he firſt entreth into Covenant with us. *I Will be their God*, hee is firſt bound, and ſeales firſt; and then, and 2 God is content to bee bound firſt.

2. Why it is so, the generall.

not till then, it followes; *they shall be my people.* This is the constant tenor of the Covenant. And shall hee begin, and wee thinke much to follow? Can there be a marriage consummated where onely the man is first married to the woman, and the woman will not after, for her part, bee married to the man? Now, God no way so much declares his willingnesse to be in Covenant, and to bee *first* in it, as by deliverances (as wee shall see more in the next reason:) great reason therefore, men should then second him by mutuall stipulation. It is an hard case, when men will not follow, where God leades.

3. Indeliverances God more especially manifesteth his fidelitie in the Grand Covenant. Psal. 107.

3. In deliverances God more especially manifesteth his fidelitie in *keeping Covenant* with his people, even when they have *broken Covenant* with him, and forfeited all into his hands. When God delivers a people out of any straite, doth not that usually suppose some *folly* of theirs going before, and provoking him to cast them into that affliction; whence, upon their *cry*, hee is pleased to deliver them.

And when they have so farre and so long broken the Lawes, and contemned the counsell of the most high, and *dealt unfaithfully in his Covenant*, as that he hath been even compelled to throw them into *darknesse and the shadow of death*: yet if then, upon their humiliation, hee be pleased to *deliver them out of all their distresses*; this is to give them fresh experience of his infinite love in *Keeping Covenant and mercy* with them, that kept no Covenant with him. This is called *a remembring of his Covenant* with his people, after that *their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and that they accept of the punishment of their iniquitie*, when God should have cast them out of their land, among their enemies, as afterwards he did. So that, in a deliverance, that which is most predominate in God, and should bee most sweet and pretious to his people and most eyed by them, is his fidelitie, mercy, and unchangeable Love in bringing out that Covenant hee once made with them, and spreading it before himselfe, and making of it good, even when they could not expect it, nor durst to plead it. Hence that passionate speech of God to rebellious *Ephraim. Is Ephraim my deare sonne? is he a pleasant child?* As if hee should have said, surely hee cannot conclude so; yet, my love, by vertue of the ancient Covenant betweene us, makes me still so to account him; witnesse that which followes; *for since I spake against him*, (that is,

Levit. 26. 41. 42.

Ier. 31. 20.

as

as resolving to cast him off for ever) *I remember him still*, (I remember I am in Covenant with him,) *therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord*: Thus, deliverance is a thread drawne out of the bowells of his Covenant. Great reason therefore that, in this case, his people should thinke of renewing their league and Covenant with the Lord on their parts, when they have so shamefully broken it, and yet hee goes on in so much mercy to manifest his fidelitie in *remembring* and *keeping* the Covenant on his part, by giving them deliverance. 3 *Why it is so, in the generall.*

Againe, fourthly and lastly, All our hopes of a *full deliverance*, of compleat happinesse, will bee delayed, if not frustrate; and, the next deliverance will stick in the birth, and want strength to bring forth, if wee come not up to a Covenant for deliverances already received. If God have delivered us once, he will doe it no more: or if hee doe somewhat, to hold us up by the chin that wee sinke not, yet will hee hold us downe from the throne, that we reigne not, till we come up actually and fully in this point of Covenanting with him. It is onely to those that *take hold of his Covenant*, that hee *gives an everlasting name which shall not be cut off*, Isa. 56. 45. 4. No complete deliverance and happinesse without a Covenant.

Hee that hath obtained most and greatest deliverances, will ere long, stand in need of more. Now, one thing is necessary to draw downe more, and to move God to *command (further) deliverances for Iacob*; yea, to powre out his whole bosome into the laps of his people, and to crowne all deliverances and blessings received, with this assurance, that he that *hath delivered*, will yet *againe deliver*; and that *is*, to enter into a solemne Covenant with the Lord, upon consideration of what he hath done already, how ever hee should please to deale with us for the future, or for removing any present pressures that lye upon us. Although God begin to deliver, yet hee will never perfect the deliverance, till this be done. The people which returned from *Babylon*, found God to keepe touch with them, to a day. So soone as the 70. yeares determined, their captivitie was dissolved, and somewhat was done, the *foundation* of *the Lords house* was laid, but the building went slowly up, the reformation of Church and State went heavily on; and, they were never in a thriving condition, till *Nehemiah*, by the good hand of God, lighted upon this course. Some *Fasts* they had kept before, yea very many; but they never thrived, till hee added to their publique and solemne *Fasting*, See Iudg. 10. from verse 9. to verse 17.

3 *Why it is so,*

sting, the fastening of them to God by a *solemne Covenant*. Then, the worke of Reformation, and establishment, went on merrily, then they prospered. Thus farre the Reasons concluding for a Covenant, upon receipt of deliverances in *generall*.

2 *Why*, for deliverance from *Babylon* is *speciall*.

2. The Reasons inducing us thereunto, upon deliverance from *Babylon* in *particular*, are these.

1 Babylon hath ever been the forest enemy.

1. Because *Babylon* (after once the Church was put under her power) had alwayes beene the most insolent, heavy, bitter, bloody enemy that ever the Church felt. The violence of *Babylon* was unsupportable, her insolency intolerable, her blood-thirstinesse insatiable. Hence the Church is bold to challenge all the world to match her misery under the yoke of Babylon; *Behold, and see, if there bee any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me*, (that is, by the heavie hand of Babylon) *in the day of his fierce wrath*, *Lam.* 1. 12.

This was so sore, that it hath beene by some Fathers, and others, conceived to be the fullest and most lively typicall expression of that matchlesse agony and extremity which our Lord himselfe (hanging upon the *Crosse*) sustained, when he bare all our sinnes, and the wrath of God due to us for them, so farre as to make a full satisfaction to the Iustice of his Father, in behalfe of all his people.

And, as it was with old *Babylon*, so it is now, and ever will be with the new, (I meane, *mysticall Babylon*) to the end of the world; might she so long continue. Even she also delights in no other drinke but the bloud of the Saints, as you shall finde in *Rev.* 17. 5. where the very name written upon her forehead sufficiently sets out her nature; *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*. And, what of her? *I saw*, saith S. *Iohn, the woman drunken with the bloud of the Saints, and with the bloud of the Martyrs of Iesus: and when I saw her, I wondred with great admiration, v.* 6. And well he might. A *woman*, and *drunke*! And, if *drunke*, would no liquor suffice, but *bloud*! no *bloud*, but that of *Saints and Martyrs*! She is never in her element, but when shee is swimming in bloud. So insatiable is she, that like the *horse-leeches* daughter, *shee never saith, it is enough*.

Therefore, when God gives any deliverance from thence; there is more then ordinary cause to close with the Lord, in a more solemne and extraordinary manner, giving him the praise and glory of so great

great a mercy. But then more especially, when God workes out the full deliverance of his Church, by the totall and finall ruine of *Babylon*. Oh then, then is the time when all the people in heaven must sing *Halleluiah*; ascribing, *salvation, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God*, Rev. 19.1. *And againe, Halleluiah*, verse 3. as if they could never sufficiently expresse themselves to God for such a deliverance, such a mercy, such a vengeance. 3. *Why it is so*, in speciall.

2. Againe. When God delivereth from *Babylon*, there is more than ordinary cause of entring into solemne Covenant with him, because the very subjecting of the Godly under that iron yoke, argues more than ordinary breach of Covenant with the Lord in time past, which stirred him up to deale so sharpely with them as to put them under the power of *Babylon*. This Provocation was exceeding great, too much to be endured even by infinite Patience it selfe; else, the people of God had never beene cast into such a furnace. It was for such a fault as dissolved the very marriage knot betweene God and his people: it was for *going a whoring from him*. For this it was, that God first *put away Israel*, giving her a Bill of divorce, *Ier.* 3. 8. And for this it was, that hee afterwards cast *Iudah* also out of his sight, 2 *King.* 17.19,20. And as it was in former times, so in later Ages of the world. What was the reason that so many millions of soules have beene exposed to the butchery of Antichrist in Mysticall *Babylon*, and to bee so hood-winckt and blinded *by strong delusions*, as *to beleeve* nothing but lies; even that Great, Great soul-killing *Lye*, that they might be damned? S. *Paul* tels us, it was this; *They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved*, but *had pleasure in unrighteousnesse*, 2 *Thes.* 2. What *unrighteousnesse*? Is it meant of every unrighteousnesse (that is in the nature of it damnable) which is to be found in the world? Surely no; but (*signanter*) of that *unrighteousnesse*, whereby men *turned the truth of God into a lye*, Rom 1. that is, by corrupting the true worship of the true God; and afterwards falling off to down-right Idolatry, even within the pales of the Church it selfe. a. Such a deliverance implies more than ordinary breach of Covenant on our parts, for which God formerly put us under such a yoke.

Most of you are well seene in the History of the Church, and can soone point your finger to the times wherein *Babylon* began to besiege *Hierusalem*, and wherein *Antichrist* began to pull off his vizzard, in the Churches of Christ: even then, when *Pictures* and *Images* began first to be set up in *Churches*, for *remembrance*: then, for

3 *Why it is so, in special.*

ornament; then for *instruction* too; and at last, for *adoration* and worship. Then, God suffered her to bee over-run, and over-spread by *Babylon*, as by an hideous *opacum*, or thicke darkenesse, and to bee exposed and prostituted to all manner of whoredomes and filthinesse: so as the slavery of the Iewish Church in old *Babylon*, was scarce a flea-biting, in comparison of the miseries of the Church Christian under the *new*, which makes havock and merchandise not of the bodies onely, but even *of the soules of men*.

Rev. 18. 13.

Now then, when God pleaseth to deliver a people from such bondage, and to awaken them effectually to looke up, and to reflect even with astonishment upon those great and gastly sinnes of theirs, which had cut asunder the cords of the Covenant betweene God and their Soules, and provoked God to subject them to so much bondage; and that they must either renew Covenant, to bee obnoxious to more wrath, and be laid open to more and greater temptations and sinnes; this cannot but exceedingly worke upon their soules, causing their hearts to melt, and their very bowels to yearne after the Lord, to enter into a new, *an everlasting Covenant that shall never bee forgotten*.

This is that which God by his servant *Ezekiel*, spake touching the deportment of the remnant of *Israel*, which should escape the sword among the nations and countries whither they had beene carried captives, *Ezek.* 6. 9. They should, upon such a deliverance, *remember* God, nor onely with griefe, but with resolution also to joyne themselves to him more firmely in a perpetuall Covenant. For, of them hee saith there; *they that escape of you shall remember mee among the nations, because I am broken with their whoriſh heart which hath departed from me, and with their eyes which goe a whoring after their idols, and they shall loath themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.* And of the same people hee saith afterwards, * that upon their returne home, *They shall take away all the detestable things, and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them, I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh, that they may walke in my statutes, and keepe mine ordinances, and doe them: and they shall bee my people, and I will bee their God.* So that here is a full Covenant striken, and that upon this ground: *viz.* the Consideration of those great sinnes they formerly committed, where-

* Cap. 11. 18, 19, 20.

by

by they had broken their firſt Covenant and departed from their God. 1. *Vſe. Reproofe.*

So farre the Reaſons, and grounds of this point; I ſhall now as briefly as I can, endeavour to bring home, and ſet on all by ſome Application, which I ſhall reduce to 3. heads, namely to matter of *Reproofe, Information* and *Exhortation*. For, if *When God vouchſafeth any deliverance to his people, eſpecially from Babylon, it bee moſt ſeaſonable and neceſſary to cloſe with him, by a more ſolemne, firme, and inviolable Covenant, to be onely his for ever*: Then. *Application threefold.*

1. How may this reprove, and condemne of great ingratitude and folly, many ſorts of men among us, that are farre from making any ſuch uſe of the deliverances which God hath wrought for them? O beloved! Should I but give you a Catalogue of the many, great, ſtupendious, and even miraculous deliverances which God hath given us; the perſonall deliverances hee hath often given to each of us apart; the publique, eminent, glorious deliverances hee hath given to us together with the whole State; that in 88. and that of 1605. I meane from the horrid helliſh *Gun-powder-Treaſon*; but eſpecially, and above all the reſt, our happy deliverance out of *Babylon* by the bleſſed Reformation of Religion begun amongſt us, ſome good number of yeares by paſt; the time would faile me. But alas! What *uſe* have wee made of them? Hath this *uſe* ever been ſo much as thought of by us? Nay verily. For, 1. *Vſe, of Reproofe.* Of foure ſorts of men. viz.

1. Some thinke it bootleſſe, thus to cloſe in with God, after an evill is over. When Gods hand is heavy upon them, ſenſe of ſmart compels them to thinke if then a fit ſeaſon to doe ſome what, to confeſſe their ſinnes, to humble themſelves, and to ſeeke God. *In their afflictions they will ſeeke me early*, ſaith the Lord. But ſo ſoone as hee takes his hand off from them, they caſt all care away, as if now (according to that homely proverbe) *the devill were dead*, and no further uſe of any feare, or diligence, were to be once thought upon, till (with *Pharaoh*) they came under a worſe plague than before; and, as if God had delivered them to no other end, but to live as they liſt, to caſt more dung in his face, and to diſhonour and provoke him yet more than ever before. 1. Of ſuch as thinke a Covenant needfull in trouble, but not after deliverance. Hoſea 5. 15.

I appeale to the conſciences of many who heare mee this day, and I require them from the Lord to witneſſe truly, whether it bee not even thus with them. If the plague knock at their doore, if death

1. *Vse.* *R proofe.*

get in at the window, and begin to shake them by the hand; there is then some apprehension of wrath and judgement, some humbling, some hankering after God. Then, Oh what would not these men doe, what would they not promise, on condition to bee delivered from their present anguish, and feares! But once deliver them, and God shall heare no more of them, till they bee in the same, or worse case againe. They turne *Covenanters*? Nay, leave that to the *Puritans*. For their parts, they thinke more of a *Covenant with death and hell*: for *God is not in all their thoughts*.

Had there beene, upon the discovery of the Powder-Treason (which this Honorable Assembly hath cause above all others to preserve eternally in fresh remembrance, and to thinke more seriously what God lookes for at all your hands upon such a deliverance) had there beene, I say, no possibilitie of escaping that Blow, what would not men have then done! Oh what prayers, what fasting, what humiliation should wee have seene! But, when the snare was once broken, what followed? A *Covenant* with God? Nothing lesse; for, so soone as ever the danger, the feare, the amazement at such an hellish project, and the neere approach to the execution of it, was a little over; the Traitors themselves fell not deeper into the pit of destruction which themselves had digged, than generally all sorts of men did into the gulfe of their old sinnes, as if they owed more to *Hell*, than to *Heaven*, for so great a deliverance. And, is it better now? Where is the *Covenant* (such a Covenant) with God, that so wonderfull a deliverance deserveth, and requireth?

These men may please themselves, and feed sweetly upon a vaine dreame that there is no harme in all this; but the Apostle brings them in a sad reckoning, after a sharpe chiding for it, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. What? saith hee, *Despisest thou the Riches of his goodnesse, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodnesse of God leadeth thee to repentance*? The end of all Gods *goodnesse* in forbearing, advancing, and giving thee prosperitie; and of his *long suffering*, in sparing thee when thou hast abused prosperitie; and of all his mercy, in delivering thee out of adversitie; is, *to lead thee to repentance*; to draw thee neerer to Himselfe, even *in an everlasting Covenant*. And if have not this effect on thee, the Apostle hath said it, and the God of Heaven will make it good, that *thou despisest the riches of his goodnesse, &c.* Thou trampleſt all mercies under thine impure feete, when they doe not

raise

raise and serue thee upso neere to thy God, as to enter a solemne *Covenant* with him. And, what then? Thou wilt not stay there, but fall into more sinne, and under greater judgement; and, *after thy hardnesse and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy selfe wrath* (that is, more and more *Wrath*) against the *day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God.* This is the end of all who make not the *Goodnesse* of God, a prevailing motive thus *to ioyne themselves to the Lord*; they fall into moe, and greater sinnes, and abominations; and so adde daily to that great heape, and to those Seas of divine wrath that hang over their heads, to overwhelme and confound them for ever.

1. *Rep of se.*

2. Others, if, after some time of lying under the weight of many pressures of the Church and State, they arrive at some hopes and opportunities of easing themselves of those burdens and of freeing the Land of the great Instruments of all their evils; they conceit strongly, that, if this be done, all is done. If but some of the *Nimrods* who have invaded their Lawes, and Liberties, bee pulled downe, (Which is an act of Iustice) how doe the *Many* (who doe nothing towards any reformation of themselves) rejoyce, and promise to themselves great matters! Now (thinke they) there will be an end of all our miseries, and we shall see golden dayes; *Iudgement shall run downe like waters, and righteousnesse like a mighty streame.*

2. Of such as having meanes of deliverance thinke it enough to rid out of the way the instruments of their evils.

Amos 5. 24.

Oh Brethren! deceive not your selves. If this bee all you look at; if, upon opening this *doore of hope*, this bee all you ayme at, to make use of the time to secure your selves against oppressors, and never thinke of closing with God; or, but thinke of it; you may perhaps farre in pursuit of your owne designes, in providing against the evils you sigh under; and, this Parliament may doe great things this way: But let mee tell you from God, that this will never doe the deede, till the *Covenant* wee have beene all this while speaking of, be resolved on, and solemnly entred into by all those that expect any blessing from that High Assembly. Nor this, nor all the Parliaments in the world shall ever be able to make us happy in such a degree at least as we expect, till the Lord hath even *glewed*, and *wedded* us all unto himselfe by mutuall Covenant.

It is not onely the making of good Lawes to remove our present grievances; no, nor the cutting downe of all the evill Instruments in our State or Church at one blow, that can secure us against the like,

1. *Vse. Reproofe.*

yea, worse evils for the future; but rather, as one wave followes another, so one mischiefe will still tread on the heeles of another, and greater plagues will ever crowd in after the former, till wee close with God by such a solemne Covenant, or perish by his wrath.

The people of *Palestine*, or *Philistia*, made themselves marvellous merry, when any of the Governours or Kings of *Israel*, or *Iudah* (such as *Sampson*, *David*, *Vzziah*, &c.) that had sorely yoked and hampered them, were removed by death, and others come in the roome that could doe but little against them. When such an one as *Ahaz*, (who never wonne battaile of them. but still went by the worse) swayed the Scepter; oh how joyfull were the *Philistines*! But marke what a damp God cast in among them in the midst of all their mirth; *Reioyce not thou whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken* (that *Vzziah*, and other Potent and successefull Kings are taken away, and weake unhappy *Ahaz* come in the roome) *for out of the Serpents root shall come forth a Cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying Serpent.* *Ahaz* shall leave an *Hezekiah* behind him, that shall pay all his Fathers debts upon the *Philistines*, and plague them yet more than all that went before him.

Isa. 14. 28.

See 2 King. 18. 8.

And have not we seene this verified also neerer home? Have not some, in former times beene taken away, who have beene great Oppressors, and Instruments of many sore pressures? And, how have men rejoyced at their fals? Nor know I, why they should not, if justice in a just way have cut them off. But alas! what good hath followed, or can be hoped for, so long as men continue *Philistines*, enemies to God and his Church, *Covenanters* with *Hell*, rather than true *Covenanters* with God? Whether is our Condition any whit better now than heretofore, when those *Leviathans* were alive, and in their height? appeale to your selves. And the reason of all is this, that men mistake the meanes of Cure, or at least short of it. The cutting off of evill Doers (how necessary soever it be) is not all, not the maine requisite to make a people happy unlesse also there be a thorough joyning of themselves to God by *Covenant*.

If you therefore that be now convened in Parliament, should sit so long as you desire, even these 7. yeares, (if your businesse should require it) and thinke, you would make such examples of men that have violated the Lawes, and invaded your Liberties; and enact so many wholesome Lawes to prevent the like presumptions for the future,

future, as should put us into a new world, causing men to admire the happy state and frame of Government which you would set up: yet all this would never produce the expected fruite, but prove as a meere dreame of an hungry man, who *in his dreame eateth* abundantly, *but when hee awakes, is emptie*; unlesse you also, not onely resolve upon, but execute this maine duty of entring *Covenant* with your God. 1. *Use Reproofe.*

Againe, thirdly, others can *roare like beares, and mourne sore like doves*, when they finde themselves disappointed of their hopes: when Parliaments have beene broken up in discontent, *When they have looked for Judgement, and there is none, for salvation, but it hath been farre from them*: then they have howled like dragons, not onely for afflictions, but perhaps for sinnes also; especially if deliverance upon deliverance hath beene snatcht from them, even when it hath seemed so neere that they had begun to take possession of it: yet, (silly men that they are!) their evils haunt them still, and prevaile more and more, after all their fastings, humblings, and strong cries to God their Redeemer. For alas! what will all this doe without a *Covenant*, without taking hold of God, and *joyning themselves* to him to bee his for ever? you may see such a state of the Church as this described by *Isaiah*: and good were it for us to take warning by it: *Wee all doe fade as a leafe, and our iniquities like the winde have taken us away.* And why all this? The next words will tell you *There is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himselfe to take hold of thee*, say they to the Lord who had *hid his face from them, and consumed them for their sinnes.* Not that they did not at all call upon God, but because they did not so call upon him as to *stirre up themselves to take hold of him* by Covenant; therefore is it accounted no better than a not calling upon him at all. Thus men loose not onely their opportunities of deliverances offered, but their duties also by which they desire to further it against another time. 3. Of such as thinke extraordinary *Fasting* and *prayer* sufficient without a Covenant. Isa. 59 11. Isa 64 6, 7.

4. Some, it may bee, goe yet further. Vpon the hearing of such a dutie (so much pressed and inculcated) they beginne to bee a little stirred, they are convinced that it is indeed true, such a Covenant is fit to be made: but here (like *Ephraim* an *unwise sonne*) *they stand still at the breaking forth of the Children* of the Covenant. They faine would, but loth they bee to goe thorough with the bargaine. They beginne to come on, and then fall backe againe. They are so long a cheapning, 4. Of such as are convinced of the necessity of a Covenant, yet come not up to it. Hosea 3. 14...

1. *Vse.*
Reproofe.

cheapning, treating, complementing, disputing how safe it may bee for them, how well it may stand with their profits, projects, ends, interests, relations; that they coole againe, and never come up to a full resolution. Oh, sayes one, this is a good course, and fit to bee taken: but my engagements, callings, Alliance, company, service will not consist with it. Another sweares, hee could finde in his heart to make tryall of it, but that hee should bee jeered, scorned, and perhaps lose his place, or hopes for it: another hee is for it, but at present hee cannot enter upon it. Thus one thing or other still keepes this dutie without doores, and holds most men off from the worke for ever.

But beloved, take heed of this dallying. What ever you thinke, it is no better than a *departing away from the living God*, that springs from *an evill heart of unbeleefe*, when, being fully convinced of the weight, necessitie, and commoditie of the dutie, you will yet, *while it is called to day*, adventure so farre to *harden your hearts*, as not to set upon the worke instantly, and to go thorough with it. *Heb.* 3.

Woe unto all such dodging Christians; they shall finde to their cost that God will write them *Lo-ammi*, Hos. 1. 9. and pronounce of them, *They are not my people, and I am not their God.*

If any thinke, what adoe is here? what meanes this man to bee so earnest? would hee have us all turne *Covenanters*? yes, with God. Why, what if I doe not? Then never looke for good from him, how faire soever thy hopes bee. "No? sayes another; Ile try that, sure. "I have seene many a good day in my time, and hope to see more, "though I never swallow this doctrine: therefore hee resolves to go hence, as he came hither, as he lived yesterday, so he will to morrow; though this day hee doe as his neighbours doe, keeping some order, (much against the will of his base lusts, that ring him but an harsh peale in his eare for his little abstinence) yet to morrow hee will bee for his swearing, drinking, whoring, any excesse, and riot, as much as ever; and yet, by grace of God he hopes to prove all these words to be but wind, and to doe as well as the best of them all when he comes to die.

But woe worth the day that ever such a man was borne, that when hee heares God calling him with so much importunitie *to stand* even *this very day before the Lord, to enter into Covenant with the Lord his God, and into his Oath*, shall so harden his necke, and harbour such *a roote of gall and wormewood* within his heart, as when hee heares *the*

words

words of the Curse upon all those that will not enter into Covenant; or, entring into it shall not keepe it, hee *shall blesse himselfe in his heart saying, I shall have peace, though I walke in the imaginations of mine heart, and adde drunkennesse to thirst*: See, and tremble at what God hath resolved to doe with that man, *Deut.* 29. 20, 21. *The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousie shall smoke against that man, and all the Curses that are written in (Gods) Booke shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.* Here is nothing but fury powred out upon such a wretch; not a blessing shall descend upon him, not a curse shall escape and goe by him; not onely himselfe, and posteritie, but his very name (so farre as it is an honour) shall all be cast out of the world, as out of the midst of a sling.

1. *Vse. Reproofe.*

If he please himselfe with this, "Yet I shall live as long as some "others; if they have any happinesse, I resolve to share with them; he will finde that God will not leave him so, but *the Lord will separate him unto evill out of all the Tribes of Israel*, so as, though all others be safe; yet, as a strucken Deere is unhearded from all the rest, and followed by the dogs till he be pul'd downe and kill'd; so shall it bee with this man, *according to all the curses of the Covenant, that are written in the Booke of the Law*. Although the whole Kingdome bee safe, and all others in it be in peace, yet hee and his house shall perish; the line of Confusion shall bee stretched out over him, hell and damnation shall be his portion, how high soever hee now beares his head, and how much soever hee suffered his heart to swell against the truth, supposing all that he likes not, to be nothing but a spice of indiscretion, yea of faction, and (it may bee) of Sedition; when yet nothing is offered, but what is (I trust) pregnantly proved out of Holy Scripture. So farre the first *Vse*.

2. This may *informe* us touching the true cause (which most neerely concernes our selves) of the slow proceedings of Reformation of things amisse among us, both in the Church and Commonwealth: Why God hath not yet given us so full a deliverance from *Babylon*; why there have beene so many ebbings and flowings in matters of Religion, yea, more ebbings than flowings; Why generall grievances swell to such an height, and that all opportunities of cure have vanished, so soone as appeareth: how it comes to passe that albeit God hath moved the heart of the King to call Parliament after Parliament, yet by and by, one spirit of division or another, sometimes

2. *Vse. Information, touching the chiefe cause why Reformation and full redresse of our evils goes on so slowly.*

2. *Vse. Information,* sometimes from one quarter, sometimes from another, (like the *evill spirit* which God sent *betweene Abimelech, and the men of Shechem,* to the ruine of both) still comes betweene, and blasteth all our hopes, leaving us in worse case than we were in before; and whence it is (in regard of our selves) that in stead of setting up the Kingdome and Ordinances of Christ in more purity, there is such a contrary mixture, and such a corrupting of all things, in Doctrine, in worship, in every thing; *Arminianisme, Sotinianisme* and *Papisti Idolatry* breaking in againe over all the Kingdome like a flood.

Iudg. 9. 23, 24.

What is a chiefe cause of all this? Have wee not *prayed?* have wee not *fasted?* Have we not had more *Fasts* at *Parliaments* of late, then in many yeares before? Yea, hath not there been, generally among Gods people, more frequent humiliations, more frequent seeking of God, notwithstanding the malice and rage of some men to discountenance and suppresse it, than in former times? Why then is Deliverance, and Reformation so slow in comming?

Surely, Beloved, wee have all this while mistaken the maine businesse, and neglected the principall part of a Religious *Fast.* You come, *Fast* after *Fast,* to seeke God in his House; You forbeare your victuals, afflict your soules, endure it out a long time; you pray, heare, confesse your sinnes, and freely acknowledge, that all is just that God hath brought upon us, and that wee suffer lesse then wee deserve. All this is well. But here is the errour, and the true Cause of the continuance of all our evils, and of their growing greater; namely, that all this while wee have never, in any *Fast,* or at any other time, entred into such a solemne and publique *Covenant* with God, as his people of old have often done upon like occasions and exigents.

That I may yet more effectually bring home this to all our hearts, give mee leave briefly to parallel the slow pace of our deliverance out of *Mysticall Babylon* with that of *Iudah,* and some of the remnant of *Israel* out of *old Babylon,* which for a long time had held them Captives.

And here first, bee pleased to call to minde, that, as touching the Captives *Iewes,* God failed not (on his part) of his promise. At the end of 70. yeares, libertie of returne from *Babylon* to *Hierusalem* was proclaimed, in the first yeare of *Cyrus* the *Persian* Monarch: whereupon, many did returne, under the conduct of *Zerobbabel.* Being come home to Hierusalem, wee may not conceive that they

Ezra 1. 1, 2. Ezra 2.

were

were not at all touched with feele of their deliverance, or of the sins which had formerly provoked the Lord, to cast them into that great bondage out of which they were delivered. 2. *Vse. Information.*

Well, on they goe; first, to offer sacrifices in the right place, *Although the foundation of the Temple of the Lord was not yet laid. In the second yeare of their coming, Zerubbabel* began *to set forward the Worke of the house of the Lord*, and the foundation was laid. But *the adversaries of Iudah* (the Great Officers or the Kingdome under the King of *Persia*) apprehending, or rather pretending, the going on of this building to be matter of prejudice and danger to that Monarchy, they procure a stay of it, upon reason of State; so as it was well nigh an hundred yeares ere they got libertie to goe on againe, and it was above an 100. yeares before the Temple could be finished. For, as many exact Chronologers observe, the Temple was not perfected in the raigne of *Darius Hystaspis*, as some have thought; but in the sixth yeare of *Darius Nothus*: betweene whom and the former *Darius*, both *Xerxes* (the husband of *Esther*, and called in Scripture *Ahasuerus*) and *Artaxerxes Longimanus* successively swayed the *Persian* Scepter. In all which time, many things were amisse; Cruelties, Oppressions, Adultery, Mixture with strange wives, and other great deformations remained. Then comes *Ezra*, after the Temple was finished, and some what he did, to set forward the work of Reformation, in the seventh yeare of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, successer to *Darius Nothus*. And yet, there was much more to doe. After him therefore comes *Nehemiah*, in the twentieth yeare of the same *Artaxerxes Mnemon*; and after all the former endeavours, hee findes the Church still weltring in her blood, and even wallowing in her owne gore; I meane, in most of her old and long continued sinnes; (although cured of Idolatry) so that still there was great corruption in doctrine, in worship, and in manners.

Ezra. 3. 6. Vers. 8. Vers. 10. Ezra 4. 1. Ezra 7. 7. Neh. 1. 1.

Whereupon he now resolves, and sets upon a more thorough Reformation of all these; but could never effect it, till beside the proclaiming, and holding of a publique *Fast*, hee and all the people lighted upon this course, namely, of entring into a publique and solemne *Covenant* with the Lord, *subscribed, sealed* and *sworne* unto, as before you have heard: and so, from that time forward, the worke prospered, and the Church was purged of many abominations, wherewith all the time she was defiled. Neh. 9. 38. and 10. 29.

2. *Vse. Information.*

Behold here, *Quanta molis erat dilectam condere Gentem*, how great a worke, how long a busineſſe to perfect a reformation even of Gods deareſt people. Their captivitie in *Babylon* laſted not halfe ſo long time, as was ſpent after their returne thence ere their Reformation could be brought to any tolerable perfection.

And why ſo? Did they omit *prayer*, and *faſting*, and ſeeking early after God? ſurely no: For, in *Zach.* 8. 19. we read of foure ſeverall publike Faſts, (* *The faſt of the fourth moneth, the faſt of the fifth moneth, the faſt of the ſeventh, and the faſt of the tenth moneth*) which they held, not onely by all the time of the 70. yeeres captivitie in *Babylon*, but many yeeres after their returne thence, *Zach.* 7. 3. and verſe 5. But all this labour was in great part loſt, for want of this addition to all their humiliation, and prayer, namely, *The ioyning of themſelves to the Lord in an everlaſting Covenant not to be forgotten.*

And when God once directed *Nehemiah* to this courſe, ſee, how all things began to thrive and come on a maine. Now, not onely the *Temple*, but even the *walls* of *Hieruſalem* were built up, (and that within one twelve yeares after this Covenant was ſmitten) which before lay waſt many ſcores of yeeres.

Let us now reflect upon our ſelves, and the State of Religion, and progreſſe of Reformation in our owne Church, that wee may make up the Parallel.

Some beginnings of our deliverance from *Babylon* wee received by King *Henry* the eighth. For, he threw out the *Pope*. His ſonne King *Edward* the ſixth came after, and caſt out Popery, in the body and bulke of it. A great worke, and a large ſtep, for the ſhort time of his infant reigne. And indeed, he had many excellent helpes that way, (beſide the zeale of his owne pious heart) an Excellent Archbiſhop, a Prudent and vigilant Protector, beſide others; elſe hee could never have done ſo much. Notwithſtanding the potency and ſecret underminings of thoſe mightie Factions then prevailing, hindred the work not a little, ſo that it exceeded not an infant-*Reformation*; yea, through the immature death of that *Ioſiah*, it ſoone prov'd abortive.

The Princeſſe that came after, quickly turn'd the Tide, before it was halfe high water: and ſhe ſet all the Gates wide open againe both for Pope, and Popery to reenter with triumph, and to drinke drunke of the bloud of our Anceſtors, till God diſcharged her, and releaſed his people from her crueltie.

So

* *Quarto menſe Vrbs fuit expugnata, quinto autem fuerit exciſum Templum & conſumptum incendio: ſeptimo menſe interfectus tandem fuit Godolias, qui ſtetera cum reſidua plebeque collecta fuerat ab ejus manu. Iejunium autem decimi menſis putant fuiſſe inſtitutum poſt urbem obſeſſam. Ergo jejunium menſis decimi, tempore alio præceſſit,* Calvin *in Loc.* Non, quod hæc omnia in eodem accidere unt anno, ſed diverſis annorum intervallis.

So that when Queene *Elizabeth* (that glorious *Deborah*) mounted the Throne, although her heart was upright and loathed the Idolatry of the former Reigne, yet found shee worke enough to restore any thing at all, and to make any beginnings of a Reformation. She soone felt, when shee would have throughly pluckt up Popery both root and branch, (superfluous Ceremonies, and all remaining raggs of superstition, as well as grosse Idolatry) that she had to doe with an *Hydra*, having such a strong partie of stout Popelings to grapple with at home, and such potent and dangerous abetters of them, to cope withall abroad. I neede not name them. I might adde hereunto, some difficulties arising from the interests and ingagements of not a few of those (though good, and holy men) that underwent voluntary exile in the heat of the *Marian* persecution; who, while they were abroad, had a large share in the *troubles at Franckford*; (too eagerly, perhaps, pursuing the *English* Formes of *Worship*, and *Discipline*) and so, when upon their returne, they were advanced to places of Dignitie, and government in this Church, they were the more apt and forward to maintaine and hold up that Cause wherein they had so farre appeared, had for which (some of them) with more heat than Charitie had so openly declared themselves, in forrein parts. And so, what by one impediment, and what by another, wee see it hath beene a long time ere our Reformation can bee thoroughly polished and perfected, as were to be wished and desired; for there is nothing so perfect, here, but is capable of more perfection. 2. *Vse. Information.*

Nay, so farre as wee become now from going forward with the worke, notwithstanding the pietie and care of our Princes since the last Restitution of Religion in this Kingdome, that (as it was in *Iosiahs* time, though his owne heart were for God, yet there was a packe of rotten men, both Priests and people, very great pretenders to Devotion, but indeed mad upon Images, and Idols) we begin to fall quite off againe; and not onely to coast anew upon the brinks of *Babylon*, from whence we were happily delivered, but even to launch out into her deepest Lakes of superstition and Idolatry, under pretence of some extraordinary *pietie of the times*, and of some *good worke in hand*.

What is the reason of all this, but that (not so much as once) since the first beginning of Reformation of Religion in this Iland, wee never (for ought I know) entred into such a solemne, publique,

2. *Vse.* 1. *Information.*

universall *Covenant* to be the Lords, as he requireth for those beginnings already given us; but have sate loose from God, and so have not joyned together as one man, zealously to propugne his truth and Ordinances, and to stand by him and his Cause, as becomes the people of God, in all just and warrantable wayes, against all opposers and gainsayers.

So long as wee please our selves in this libertie of our holding off from a Covenant with God, wee may feede our selves with vaine hopes of redresse of things amisse, but shall spend no better than those libertines and back-sliders in *Ier.* 14. who lookt for great matters from God, but came short of all, and then seemed to wonder at the reason. For, thus they bespake him, vers. 8. *O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the Land, and as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry* (onely) *for a night? Why shouldst thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou O Lord, art in the midst of us, and wee are called by thy name.* See here how they are put to it. They acknowledge his Power, Goodnesse, Presence, yet they are not saved. Hee seemes to be like *Sampson*, with his Lockes cut off, as if he were not able to save, or would not doe it: and this they wonder and stand amazed at, as a thing incredible and impossible.

But God makes them a short and sharpe answer, (which may also serve us) ver. 10. *Thus*, saith the Lord, *have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet; therefore the Lord doth not accept them.* If God be as *a wayfaring* man; sometimes with a people, more often gone from them; sometimes blessing, sometimes crossing them, and suffering them to fall under heavy pressures, and never keeps an even and setled station or course of proceeding with them, it is but that he hath learnt from themselves (as I may so speake:) they will bee their owne men; they will not bee tyed to him so strictly; they will have some libertie for their lusts, for the world, for the devill, for any thing: and loe, here is the fruit of it, God will not bee bound to, nor walke with them; hee will not draw out that strength, that goodnesse, that compassion which might deliver them from the evils they howle under; He will neither heare them, nor any body else for them; not *Ieremy* himselfe, *vers.* 11. not *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Iob*, *Ezek.* 4. Nothing therefore, but a more solemne and strict Covenant with God, will put us into a posture and condition capable of perfect

perfect redresse of our grievances, how faire so ever either now or hereafter, wee may seeme to bee for it. This is the second use. 3. *Vse. Exhortation.*

Thirdly, *suffer*, I beseech you, a few *words of exhortation*. The returning Iewes (you see) call upon all their Nation to enter into *Covenant*. Give me leave then, to call upon You the *Representative Body* of this whole Kingdome who stand here before the Lord this day to humble your soules; and let me also prevaile with you all, to *ingage your selves*, even this day, *to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant that shall not be forgotten*. Make this day, a day indeed, a day of *Covenanting* with God, and God shall Covenant with you, and make it the beginning of more happinesse then ever you yet enjoyed.

Beloved, mistake mee not, my meaning extends not to engage you in any *Civill Covenant* and *Bond* for defence of your Municipall Lawes and liberties. No doubt you will bee able to finde meanes enow (by the blessing of God) to settle those things, in a legall way; especially if you be carefull to Covenant with God. Much lesse is it my purpose to draw you into that late *Ecclesiasticall Oath and Covenant* (enjoyned by the late *Canon*) which in my apprehension is little lesse than a Combination and Conspiracy against both King and State. My businesse is, meerely to perswade you into a *Religious Covenant with God*, as himselfe hath prescribed and commanded; and, his people, in the best times of Reformation, have readily admitted: namely, every man to stirre up himselfe and to lift up his Soule to take hold of God to bee glued and united to him, in all faithfulnesse, sincerity, care, and diligence, to be onely his for ever.

This if we doe, we needs not care much for other Covenants: God will provide for that, and make a league for us even with the *beasts of the field*, and with the *stones of the street*; hee will *make* our *Exactors peace*, and our *Officers righteousnesse*, violence *shall no more be heard in the Land, nor wasting, nor destruction within our borders*; our very *Walls* shall bee *salvation*, and our *Gates praise*. Hee will be a God of Covenants, and take care for our estates, Lawes, liberties, lives, children and all that belong to us, when once this is done. Isa. 60. 17. 18.

Therefore I beseech you, yea I require you in the name of the God of heaven, whose you are, whom you serve, before whom you stand, and from whom you expect salvation in the midst of the Earth, as well as in Heaven, that you forthwith enter into this bond. Ex-

pect

3. *Vse. Exhortation.*

pect no assistance, no successe in any of your Consultations, in any Lawes that you agree upon, till you have fully brought your hearts to this point, to follow the Lord fully; to be no more for your selves than you would have the dearest wife of your bosome to bee for any other man in the world; but to bee wholly for the Lord, to imploy and improve all your wit, abilities, industry, counsels, actions, estates, honor, and lives to promote his service and honour, what ever become of your selves and yours for doing of it. Say not as some Iecrers (of whom it is hard to judge whether their malice or ignorance bee the greater) doe, that there needs no more Covenants that what wee made in Baptisme, and that all other Covenants savour strongly of faction, and the Puritan Leaven. For, so Gods people of old made a *Covenant* of *Circumcision*, and after by *Sacrifice*, that is, in every *sacrifice* which they offered, they did renew their Covenant begun in *Circumcision*. Nevertheless, God thought it necessary often to call them out to strike another solemne Covenant with him besides the former. You have already heard, that so soone as the Israelites were gone out of Egypt, and entred a little way! into the wildernesse, hee put them upon a *Covenant*. When he brought them neere to *Canaan*, he required another solemne *Covenant* of them. And when *Ioshuah* had brought them into *Canaan*, and divided to each of them the lot of his inheritance, hee drew them into another solemne *Covenant*, *Iosh.* 24. So that here was Covenant upon Covenant, and yet can no man (without blasphemy) charge it with any Puritan humour, faction, or any thing superfluous or uncomely for the Greatest on earth to submit unto.

Gen. 17. 10.

Psal. 50 5.

Exod. 19.

Deut. 29.

That I may a little more enforce this dutie, and quicken you to the imbracing of it, give mee leave to present you with some *Motives* further to presse you to it, and with some few *Directions* to guide you in it.

Motives to a Covenant.

1. For, *Motives.*

1. Our many *Deliverances.*

Consider 1. how many, great, admirable, and even miraculous deliverances God hath given us; What great things hee hath done for us. No Nation under heaven can say more to his praise, in this kinde, than we have cause to doe. Our Great deliverances out of *Babylon*, from the *Spanish Invasion*, from the *Gun-powder Treason*, and from many other evils and feares, do all call upon you for a Covenant. Yea, even the present Mercy and Opportunity of opening that Ancient,

cient, Regular and Approved Way of cure of those publique evils that threaten confusion and desolation to all, pleades hard for the same dutie. But among all these, I desire You of that Great and honourable Body of the Parliament, to reflect sadly upon that Stupendious Deliverance from the *Gun-powder Treason*, which more especially and immediately was bent against You. For, albeit the ruine of the whole Kingdome was in their Eye who were the Cursed Instruments of Antichrist, and of the Devill his Father, end that hellish Designe; yet no blow could have come at us, but through Your sides. And, albeit some of You that have the honour to be members of this present Parliament, were then unborne; yet had that Plot taken effect, scarce any of You had beene this day in being, to have sate there now, but had long since beene covered and buried under the ashes of confusion. Thinke now, whether such a preservation deserve lesse at Your hands, then to give Your selves to Your Great Deliverer, for so Great a Deliverance, whereby three Nations destinated at once to Death, received no lesse than a joyfull resurrection from the Dead, and were againe *borne at once*.

3. *Vse.* *Exhortation.* Motives.

Therefore, let not this great mercy seeme small in Your eyes. And remember too, that you may have as much need of God another time: nay, you know not what need You may have of him this present Parliament. You cannot be ignorant of the many murmures and more than whisperings of some desperate and devillish conception suspected to bee now in the wombe of the Iesuiticall faction: And how neere it may bee to the birth, or how prodigious it may prove being borne, I take not upon me to divine: but this wee are all sure of, that what ever it be which they are big withall, it shall not want the least graine of the utmost extremitie of malice and mischiefe, that all the wit, power, and industry of Hell it selfe can contribute unto it and that they labour, as a woman in travaile, to be speedily delivered of it.

What dangers, and what cause of feare there may bee at the present. I leave to your Wisedome to consider. But this bee confident of, if Deliverances already received can prevalle with you for a *Covenant*, that Covenant will be your securitie; for it will certainly engage all the power and wisedome of the Great and only wise God of heaven and earth to be on your side for ever. So that if God himselfe have power enough, wisdome enough, and care enough, you

3. *Vse. Exhortation. Motives.*

cannot miscarry; *no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper*, no plot, *no gates of hell shall prevaile against you*. And, if hee have goodnesse enough, mercy enough, bowels enow in him, he will then also raine downe aboundance of truth, righteousnesse, justice, peace and plentie upon all Corners of the Land, from whence, and on whose errand, You are now come together. Therefore it becomes you, above all others, to be first in a *Covenant*.

2. There can be no full enjoying of God, without a Covenant.

2. Consider that, till we doe this, there cannot be such a full enjoying of God, as other wise there might be. Indeed, the perfect fruition of God is not to be expected till wee come to heaven, but yet wee might have much more of God, even in this life, than now wee have, could we be perswaded to such a *Covenant* with him.

Whatsoever experience wee have of him now in any deliverance bestowed, it would be doubled, if, upon the deliverance received, we would thus be *ioyned* to him. Nor is this a notion or conceit onely, but a reall trueth.

For, marke what He saith to his people, *Hos. 2. vers. 19. 20. I will marry thee unto me for ever, I will betroath thee unto me in righteousnesse, and in Iudgement, and in loving kindnesse, and in mercies, I will even marry thee unto me in faithfulnesse, and thou shalt know the Lord.* He that enters into Covenant with God, is *betroathed*, yea even *married* to him: And how married? even to the partaking of all his goods, of all hee hath, yea of himselfe, and all that hee is. As the wife may say, *Vbi tu Caius, ego Caia*; as *Laban* sometimes, of *Iacobs* wives, children, and cattell, *These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattell are my cattell, and all that thou seest are mine:* So a man once *married* to the Lord by *Covenant*, may without arrogancy say, this *righteousnesse* is my righteousnesse, this *iudgement* is my judgement, this *loving kindnesse, these mercies, this faithfulnesse* which I see in thee, and all that thou hast is mine, for my comfort, supply, support, direction, salvation, and what not?

Gen. 31. 43.

And take notice of that phrase, *Thou shalt know the Lord.* Did they not *know* him before? Yes; but never in such a manner, with such a *Knowledge*, at least in such a measure. They shall now know him in such neere, familiar, sweet and ineffable expressions of his deerest, deepest, choysest conjugall love, as they never tasted, nor could taste of before.

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We know how it is with a wife married to a loving husband. They loved one another before marriage, and many expreſſions of a ſpeciall love paſſed betweene them, but they never enjoyed one another fully till the marriage was ſolemnized. Then, there is not only a more intimate manifeſtation of fervent, intire, loyall, chaſte love; but a further enlarging and ſtretching out of mutuall affections to each other, than they could poſſibly have beleeved they ſhould ever have reached unto, till now experience aſſure them of it. And even thus it is betweene us and God. Is he good in deliverances? have wee taſted of his love already? Oh how great would his goodneſſe bee, how full of grace, mercy, bountie; and, how would hee communicate even whole rivers of all theſe to that Soule that would once come up to him, and cloſe with him in an *everlaſting Covenant*! *All the Wayes of the Lord are mercy and trueth, unto ſuch as* (make and) *keep Covenant With him, Pſal.* 25. 19. 3. *Vſe. Exhortation. Motives.*

3. Conſider that what ever worke God calls You to, Yee will never buckle thoroughly to it, till you have entred into *Covenant* with him. An apprentiſe boy when hee goes to a Maſter upon tryall onely, his minde is now on, then off againe; ſometimes he could like the trade, by and by his minde hangs after his Mother at home, or after ſome other courſe of life, and he never ſets cloſe to his buſineſſe, till hee be bound. When once the Indentures be ſealed, and he enrolled, hee knowes there is now more time to deliberate; but hee muſt fall to his buſineſſe, or elſe take what happens for his idleneſſe and negligence. So is it with a wife; if ſhe be but onely promiſed, or betroathed to a man, ſhe may come to his houſe, and caſt an eye up and downe; but it is rather to obſerve, than to act: ſhe may perhaps caſt out a word now and then ſomewhat freely alſo; but ſhee never ſets her ſelfe to guide the houſe, or to doe any thing to purpoſe, till ſhe be married: then, *ſhe careth for the things of the world*; that is, with all poſſible diligence looking to, and managing of the buſineſſe of the family committed to her, *how ſhe may pleaſe her husband*: all her thoughts, care, diligence run this way; ſhe makes it her buſineſſe that ſhe muſt ſticke unto, and daily manage as a part of the marriage Covenant. And thus alſo it will be with you. You have much worke under your hands, and are like to have more; and I hope you deſire to doe all in truth of heart, for God, and not for ends of your owne: but let me tell you this will never be done throughly, till once you be married

3 No buckling to the worke God calls us unto, without a Covenant.

1 Cor 7 34.

3. *Vſe. Exhortation. Motiv. 5.*

marryed to him by ſolemne *Covenant*. Then will you *care indeed for the things of the Lord, how you may pleaſe the Lord*, in every cauſe, in every Anſwer to any Petition, and in every Vote of any Bill, or ſentence. You would then thinke, when you come to manage, debate, vote, any Queſtion, "I am the Lords, not mine owne, not my friends; "will this I doe, ſtand with my Covenant? will it pleaſe God? will "it bee profitable for the State? is it agreeable to Juſtice and "equitie? Then on with it, no man ſhall divert, or take mee off. But, till then, one will intreate for his friend, another for his; one will make you one way, another will draw you another way; and they both are your friends, and you know not how to deny either: and thus are you even torne in peeces betweene them, in ſo much as ſometimes reſolve to bee abſent, or to ſit ſtill and ſay nothing; or, to gratifie him that hath moſt power with You, bee the cauſe what it will. But when once the Covenant is ſealed, all this will be at an end, You will quickly ſtop your eares againſt all perſwaſions that may hinder Iuſtice and Reformation; and, when this is knowne, men will ſoone forbeare alſo to trouble You with ſuch ſolicitations.

4. Wicked men Covenant with Hell. Iſay 28.

And fourthly; Wicked men ſticke not at a *Covenant with death and hell* it ſelfe, ſo they may but ſatisfie their Luſts; though they know the end thereof will be damnation. Oh then ſhall not we much more make a *Covenant* with our *God* to doe his will, which will bee beneficiall and comfortable both here and hereafter, and procure a full torrent of his mercies, bountie, grace, and eternall life, to flow in upon us!

5. The Devill himſelfe will do no great matters for his vaſſals without a Covenant.

5. Conſider that the Devill himſelfe will have a *Covenant* from all his vaſſals that expect any extraordinary matters from him; elſe, hee will not be engaged to be at their Command. There is not a Witch that hath the Devill at her beck, but ſhee muſt ſeale a Covenant to him, ſometims with her bloud, ſometimes by other rites and devices, and perhaps hee muſt ſucke her too (as in thoſe helliſh bargaines you know they uſe;) and then, hee is for her, during the time agreed upon. And ſhall we thinke God will bee ſo cheape, as to bee (with reverence be it ſpoken) at our Command, to helpe, direct, aſſiſt, deliver and ſave us, who will not doe ſo much for him as Witches and Sorcerers will doe for the Devill?

In the 45. of *Iſay*, verſ. 11. there is a ſtrong expreſſion this way; *Thus ſaith the Lord, the Holy One of Iſrael, and his Maker, aske of*

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mee things to come concerning my ſonnes, and concerning the Worke of my hands Command yee mee. It is not to be thought that God complementeth with his people, but is free and hearty in the expreſſion of what they ſhall really find him. But marke; it *concernes his Sonne*; that is, thoſe that are truely in Covenant with him. This priviledge is for none elſe. So that the way to have God at *Command*, (with humilitie be it uſed) is to bee his *ſonnes* and *daughters* by *Covenant*. For, to whom it is ſaid, *I will bee their God, and they ſhall bee my people*, to them it is ſpoken, *I will bee a father unto you, and yee ſhall bee my ſonnes and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almightie*, 2 Cor. 6. 18. And to them he ſaith alſo, *Command ye me.* 2. Uſe. Exhortation. Motives.

6. Conſider that it is the proper and chiefe buſineſſe of a *Faſt*, to enter into *Covenant* with God. You ſee it is to be the Practiſe of the Church in *Nehemiahs* time. And where this hath beene omitted, the *Faſt* hath been loſt. God never accounted any of thoſe foure annuall ſolemne *Faſts* before mentioned, that were ſo long in uſe among the Iewes, to be *faſts unto him*; but calls them, *faſts to themſelves*, Zach. 7. 5. 6. Why, but becauſe they looked no further in their Faſts, but *to afflict their ſoules for a day, to bow downe their heads as a bulrush, and to ſpread ſack-cloth and aſhes under them*, and there an end. But they loſt all their labour, getting nothing from God but a chiding and contempt. 6. This is the proper worke of a Religious Faſt *Nehem. 9.* Iſay 58.

And in truth, when will wee thus *joyne* our ſelves to the Lord, if not at a *Faſt*? Then, are our hearts in more than ordinary time for ſuch a worke, when wee are brought to ſet our ſinnes before us, and humbly to confeſſe, bewaile and renounce them; when wee have taken ſome paines with our Soules to ſoften, and melt them before the Lord; eſpecially if then they bee in any meaſure raiſed up towards Him, with any apprehenſion of his love in the pardon of ſo many and great ſinnes, even when the Soule is moſt caſt downe for them. Then, I ſay, ſtrike through the Covenant, or it will never be. If you let ſlip this opportunitie, you may perhaps never obtaine the like while you live; but either your ſelves may bee cut off, or your hearts ſhut up in deſperate hardneſſe, like unto *Pharaoh*, whom every deliverance, and new experience of Gods favour in taking off new evils, hardened more, and made worſe.

7. In the laſt place (and let it not have the leaſt force of perſwaſion) remember and conſider that this day, even this very day, the

2. *Vse. Exhortation.* Meanes.

7. This very Day began the second Reformation of Religion.

17. of *November*, 82. yeares sithence, began a new resurrection of this Kingdome from the dead, our second happy reformation of Religion by the auspitious entrance of our late Royall *Deborah* (worthy of eternall remembrance and honour) into her blessed and glorious Reigne; and that, from thenceforth Religion thrived, and prospered under her Government with admirable successe, against a whole world of oppositions from Popish factors at home and abroad: So as the very Gates of hell were never able to extinguish that Light, which God by her meanes hath set up amongst us.

Consider I beseech you, that it is not without a speciall Providence, that this your meeting was cast upon this very day (for, I presume, little did you thinke of the 17. of *November*, when you first fixed on this day for your *Fast*;) that, even from thence, one hammer might bee borrowed to drive home this nayle of Exhortation; that the very memory of so blessed a worke begun on this very day, might throughly inflame you with desire to enter into a *Covenant*; and so, to goe forward to perfect that happy Reformation, which yet in many parts lies unpolished and unperfect.

Oh suffer not that *doore of hope* by Her set open this day, to bee againe shut, for want of a *Covenant*. If you would indeed honour Her precious memory; yea, honour God and your selves, and not onely continue the possession of what shee (as a most glorious Conduit pipe) hath transmitted to us, but perfect the worke, set upon this dutie of *ioyning our selves to the Lord in an everlasting Covenant that shall not be forgotten*. And so have you the *Motives*.

Meanes how to enter into Covenant.

2. I shall now shut up all with some few *Directions* to help us in it. And here, passing by what hath beene already spoken touching the *preparatives* to it, the *Substance* of it, and the *properties* required in it, I shall onely give you these sixe subsequent *Directions*.

1. Give a bill of Divorce to all your Lusts.

1. Give a bill of divorce to all your Lusts, or kill them out right. This Covenant is a marriage Covenant, and there is no marrying with God, so long as your former husband, your base corruptions, your swearing, riot, drunkennesse, uncleannesse, pride, oppression, and what ever else your soules *know to be the plague of your owne hearts*, remaine alive and undivorced. *For the Woman which hath an husband, is bound by the Law to her husband, so long as hee liveth*; but if hee be once *dead, she is free from that Law*, Rom. 7. Therefore send

send these packing, in the first place. A wise man will never marry a strumpet, nor with any woman that hath another husband; his wife shall bee onely his owne, none else shall have interest in her. Much lesse then, will the Holy and Iealous God admit of any Spouse that is wedded to any lust, and so continueth. Say then, what wilt thou now doe? wilt thou still keepe thy darling lust? Hast thou been a swearer, and so thou wilt bee? a drunkard, an uncleane person, an oppressour, a prophane *Esau*, and wilt be so still? Know, that God will none of thee, but abhorres all such as thou art. Hee will admit none into Covenant but such as *touch not the uncleane thing, but separate* from it. To whom onely it is, that he promiseth, *I will bee their God, and they shall be my people.* 2. *Exhortation.* Meanes. 2 Cor. 6.

2. More especially purge out and cast away (as *a Menstruous cloth*) all *Idols* and *Idolatry* in particular. All our Lusts are lothsome to his stomack, but nothing is so abominable to his Soule, as *Idolatry*. This is that spirituall whoredome, which meritoriously dissolves the marriage bond where it is already knit, and lies as a barre in the way to a Covenant with God, where yet it is not made. This was it for which the Lord proceeded so severely, first against the ten Tribes, and then against the residue, as you all know. For this, the Land spewed them out. And where ever God promiseth to recall them, he usually promiseth this, (which should first be done) *From all your Idols will I cleanse you, Ezek.* 36. 25. *Ephraim also shall say, What have to doe any more with Idols? Hos.* 14. 8. and all shall cast them away with detestation, saying, *Get thee hence*, Isa. 30. 22. 2. More especially purge out and cast away all Idols and Idolatry Psal. 4. 5. Ier. 44. 4. 2 King. 17.

Every Idol is that great *Image of Iealousie*, which the Lord can by no meanes endure, and which will certainly bee the destruction of King and People, where ever it is entertained, especially if againe received in, after it hath been once ejected. A sad example whereof we have in *Iudah*, where, after *Iosiah had taken away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve the Lord onely*, the Act of Resumption of Idols and Idolatry by the succeeding Kings (although it is probable they did it onely *secretly* like those in 2 *King.* 17. 9.) became the ruine of those Kings, and Kingdomes. 2 Chro. 34. 33.

Beloved, let me speake freely, for I speake for God, and for all your safeties. You cannot bee ignorant of the grosse Idolatry daily encreasing among us, and committed not (as adultery) in Corners onely,

3. *Vse.* *Exhortation.* Meanes.

onely, but in the open light; people going to, and comming from the Masse in great multitudes, and that as ordinarily, openly, confidently as others goe to and from our Churches. And I doubt not but some of you doe know the number of Masses to exceed that of Sermons.

Whose heart bleeds not over this prodigious growth of Popery, and over-flowing of Popish Masses? Who knowes not, that in the Masse is committed the most abominable Idolatry that ever the Sun beheld in the Christian world? Who remembers not with indignation and horror, how often that insatiable Idoll hath bathed it selfe in the bloud of many of our Ancestors and Progenitors? And can any be so silly as to beleeve, that it will rest satisfied till it swim againe in our bloud also, unlesse we will joyne with Idolaters, and so perish in Hell? For what ever some men talke of the possibilitie of the salvation of some persons in that Church, (as they call it) yet it is agreed on all hands, among us, that for those of our owne Nation and once of our owne Church where the light hath so long shined in so much brightnesse, so as they have both received and professed it; if they shall (whether to gratifie a Parent, a wife, husband, friend, Master, &c.) put out their owne eyes, and returne backe to *Babylon* from whence they were once set free, their case is very desperate and dismall, and *it had beene better for them never to have knowne the way of righteousnesse, then after they have knowne it to turne from the holy Commandement once delivered unto them.* 2 Pet 2. Therefore I beseech you to take care of these above others.

Nor speak I this, onely to prevent a publique toleration, (which I hope, through the care of our pious King, and your diligence, our eyes shall never see) but to put on Authoritie to the utter rooting out of that abomination, although committed in secret, and with connivance onely. 2 *King* 17.9.

If then you will not halt betweene two opinions, if you will bee thorough for God, and follow him fully, downe with all *Idols* and *Idolatry* through the Kingdome, so farre as the making of the Lawes yet more strict and full for that purpose, may effect it. Till then, you may, if you will, talke of a *Covenant*, and thinke to doe great matters: but that Great God who is so jealous of his glory in that, above all other things, will abhorre all Covenants with you. And if you, having now such opportunitie and power, shall not throughly cleanse the

Land

Land of theſe ſpirituall whoredomes ſo boldly facing and even out-facing the glorious Goſpell profeſſed among us; bee ſure, that, in ſtead of a bleſſing upon your Conſultations and proceedings, you will draw downe a Curſe that will cleave to you, and goe home with you, and ſcatter like poyſon over all parts and Corners of the whole Kingdome, till all be utterly conſumed and become a deſolation. 3. *Vſe. Exhortation. Meanes.*

You all I thinke, agree upon the neceſſitie of a great Reformation. Where ſhould you begin then, but where God ever begins? Looke into the Stories of *Aſa*, *Iehoſaphat*, *Hezekiah*, *Ioſiah*, and even of *Manaſſeh* himſelfe, (the groſſeſt Idolater and moſt bloudy Tyrant that ever reigned in *Iudah*) when once God had throughly humbled him; and you ſhall ever finde that they began their grand Reformation at *Idols*, and *Idolatry* committed with them. I ſpeake not this to backe or countenance any tumultuous or ſeditious ſpirits that have lately been ſtirred up to doe things without Commiſſion; but to You, whom God hath duely called to the worke, and indiſpenſibly requires it at your hands.

3. *Execute true Iudgement* and Iuſtice. *Looſe the Land of Wickedneſſe, undoe the heavie burdens, let the oppreſſed goe free, and breake every yoke* of the oppreſſor. This is a maine part of an acceptable *Faſt*, and therefore muſt be performed of all that will enter into Covenant with God. And this was part of Gods Anſwer to the Iewes enquiring of the Prophet whether they ſhould continue their ſolemne Faſts? *Zach.* 7. Therefore herein deale impartially and throughly, for hereby the Throne it ſelfe is eſtabliſhed. It is true, a difference muſt bee put between thoſe that are onely led on in evill wayes by others and thoſe that are leaders of others: but it becomes not mee to preſcribe to you in this caſe, your owne wiſedome will teach you that. Onely I am to pray you, that if you ſhall finde any eſcapes to have been made in the ordinary Courts of Iuſtice, in the condigne puniſhment of *Murder*, and *Idolatry*, take notice of them, and there bee ſure to ſtrike home, as *Samuel* did where *Saul* himſelfe had been too indulgent. There is nothing makes you ſuch faire Images of God (in the relation you now ſtand) as due execution of Iuſtice and Iudgement. Therefore, if you will indeed enter into a Covenant, let this be done. 3. Execute true Iudgement. Iſa. 58. 6.

4. Do your beſt to draw as many as you can the ſame way. Parents and 4. Draw others alſo.

3. *Vse. Exhortation. Masters.* and Masters are bound to take care that their children and families doe feare, and serve God, as well as themselves. And you who now appeare before him in behalfe of the Kingdome, as you must enter into a Covenant for them as well as for your selves, so must you doe your utmost that they also for themselves may passe under the same Covenant, with you. The representative Body of Israel that stood before the Lord to make a Covenant, *Deut.* 29. 15. made it not onely for themselves and such as were present, but for all that were absent also. And *Iosiah* when he entred into a Covenant himselfe, hee not onely caused *all that were present of Iudah at the house of the Lord*, to stand to it, 2 *Chro.* 34. 32. But he *made all Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God, ver.* 33. that is, to strike a Covenant with him. Therefore take care that all others, when yee returne home, may make a Covenant before the Lord to walke after him in all his Commandements: that God may be set up more and more, and the hearts of all men may be lifted up in the waves of the Lord to take hold of his Covenant also. If you doe not this, you doe nothing; more is required at your hands, than of private persons, who yet are bound to call upon others (as the men in my Text) saying, *Come and let us joyne our selves unto the Lord in an everlasting Covenant.*

5. Set up way-markes to Zion. 5. Would you have this to be done, namely, that all should *appeare before God in Zion*, for this purpose? Then set up *Way-markes* to direct them thither. Take speciall care that the Ordinances of God bee set up, and held up, in more puritie and plentie. Downe at once with all inventions and fancies of men, which corrupt and adulterate the pure worship of God. Let none but He be worshipped, and let no worship be thrust upon him which himselfe hath not prescribed. Herein especially (yet still within your bounds) be zealous, and quit your selves like men.

Above all, take better order for the more frequent, and better performance, and due countenancing of that now vilified (but highly necessary) Ordinance of Preaching, which albeit it be Gods owne arme and power unto salvation, is yet brought into so deepe contempt (and by none more than by those who should labour most to hold up the honour of it) that it is made a matter of scorne, and become the odious Character of a *Puritan*, to be an assiduous Preacher. Yea, so farre have some men runne mad this way, that it is held a crime deserving Censure in the highest Ecclesiasticall Court in this King-

Kingdome, to tell but a few Clergie men out of a Pulpit, that it is an essentiall part of the Office of a Bishop, to Preach. * Some of you know that I belye them not.

3. *Vse. Exhortation.* Meanes

* But *ab initio* it was not so. The third part of the *Hom.* against the perill of Idolatry, speaking of the Bishops of the Primitive times saith, that *They were then Preaching Bishops, and more often seene in pulpits than in Princes Palaces more often occupied in his Legacy, who said, goe ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to all men, than in Embassages and affaires of Princes of this world,* p. 59. edit. 1623.

And is it not then high time to vindicate the honour of Preaching from those virulent and scurrilous tongues and pens, that have of late dayes (more than ever) blasphem'd this Ordinance; and to take more pitie of the many darke and barren parts of this kingdome, where many scarce have a Sermon in seven yeeres; nay some (as divers of worth doe credibly report) not in their whole lives? Hath not God himselfe said plainly, [a] *Where there is no vision the people perish?* Is it not his owne complaint, [b] *My people are destroyed for lacke of knowledge?* And how so? thus; *for a long season Israel had been without a teaching Priest, and without the Law,* 2 Chro. 15. 3. And marke too, that while they had no teaching Priest they were *without the true God* also. For, there is no comming at the *true God,* in the ordinary way, but by a *teaching Priest.* [c] *How* shall they heare without a Preacher? And [d] *it pleaseth God by the foolishnesse of preaching to save them that beleeve:* and [e] *faith comes by hearing.* Wherefore I dare pronounce, that while so many thousands within the Kings Dominions, especially in *England, Wales,* and *Ireland, are still* suffered to *sit in such darknesse and in the shadow of death,* and so to perish for ever for want of constant, sound, profitable Preaching, it is impossible that they should bee capable of a Covenant with God; or, that it may be truly said, that the maine body of these kingdomes are incase to make a Covenant with him; unlesse you, the representative Body thereof take more care than ever yet hath been taken in this behalfe.

[a] Pro. 29. 18.
[b] Hos. 4. 6.
[c] Rom. 10. 14.
[d] 1 Cor. 1. 21.
[e] Rom. 10. 17.

I know the many plea's of many idle droanes and mercilesse men to excuse and defend an unpreaching, or seldome-preaching Ministry; but all their fig-leaves are too short to cover their owne shame, and the nakednesse of those poore perishing people whom such men make naked, to their owne destruction also.

To tell us, that preaching indeede is necessary for the planting of a Church, but not so afterwards: is nothing but to bewray their owne sottish ignorance. Is not the word preached, the *milke* and food whereby men are, and must be continually nourished *to grow* up in the body of Christ as well as the *Seed* whereof they are first begotten unto Christ? And can men that are borne, and living,

1 Pet. 2. 2. Eph. 4. Ian. 1. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 23.

3. Vse. Exhortation. Motives.

live safely, or at all, without continuall supply of food convenient for them.

What fearefull trifling is this in a businesse of such high Concernment! Good *Iehoshaphat*, when *his heart was* once *lift up in the wayes of the Lord*, tooke other order: for, hee sent not onely some of the prime *Levites* and *Priests*, who *taught in Iudah and had the Booke of the Law of the Lord with them, and went about through all the Cities of Iudah and taught the people*, 2 *Chro.* 17.8 9. but with them he sent divers of his *Princes and chiefe Officers, Eenhail, Obadiah*, and sundry others, to see that this worke should be effectually done, *verse* 7. yea (as our late Translation hath it) *hee sent to them to teach in the Cities of Iudah*:) that is, that they should take as much care of the businesse, by putting on the Priests and Levites, as if they themselves in person were bound to doe all the worke. And hence it was, that God gave this testimony of *Iehoshaphat*, that *he walked in the first Wayes of his father David*, vers. 3. that *he had riches and honour in abundance*, vers. 5. and that *the feare of the Lord fell upon all the Kingdomes of the Land round about Iudah, so that they made no warre against* IEHOSHAPHAT, Vers. 10. So that, beside the spirituall benefit, a Preaching Ministry is one of the best advantages to secure a State; it is (you see) not onely an hedge, but *walles and Bulwarkes* unto any Kingdome.

And yet, as many of our blind guides and Idoll Shepheards care not to erect Preaching where there is none, so doe they all they can to cheat and defraud those of it who doe or would enjoy it, sometimes by pulling it downe where it is set up, and (to fill up the measure of their wickednesse) glorying in it, when they have done; sometimes by striking out the teeth of it, that if men will needes preach, yet it shall be to little purpose; onely a frigid, toothlesse, sapplesse discourse, never piercing deeper than the eare. If the Preacher come home to convince the Conscience of particulars that need reformation, (which yet was the old course, and should be still) the Preacher is either derided as worthy of nothing but contempt, or else censured as indiscreet, rash, factious, and seditious.

And least men should surfeit of Preaching, how bee all Sermons, in the afternoones of the LORDS Dayes, cryed downe, as the markes of Iudaizing Puritanisme, and as a burden intolerable to the people!

Indeed,

Indeed, it is true, that when Authoritie first commanded the afternoones Sermon to be converted into *Catechising*, there was not onely no hurt done, but a wise and needfull course prescribed for the best edifying of popular Auditories. But as some have handled the matter, it is now become a great hinderance to edification. If a Minister would carefully and solidly open the severall heads of Catechisme, confirme them by Scripture, and bring them home by some short and familiar application most fitable to vulgar eares and Capacities; I hold it simply the most profitable exercise (at least for one part of the day) that can bee set up for the increase of sound knowledge and Pietie: and pitie it is that this is so much neglected. *But this*, say our new Masters, *is worse than preaching*. Therefore they enjoyn all to keepe onely to the bare Questions and Answers of the *Childs* Catechisme. And if any presume to adde any exposition or instruction, he is by some hurried from post to pillar, and censured as a pernitious Malefactor. 3. *Vse. Exhortation. Meanes.*

And as they have thus thrust all preaching (be it but Catecheticall) out of the Church in the afternoones of the Lords Day, so have they shut divers able, godly, discreet Pastors out of their owne Pulpits on the weeke dayes, even in Populous Townes, where the Ministers were willing to bestow their paines, (and so for many yeares with great fruit and comfort to the whole Country had done) *gratis*, for the refreshing many hungry Soules who had no preaching at home in their owne Parishes, and dare not stirre thence on the Lords day to seeke it abroad.

Nay, some of your Cathedrall Men are come to that passe, that when any Sermon (such as it is) is preached in the Cathedrall or Collegiate Church, no Sermon must then be preached in the Parish Church or Churches adjoyning, meerely to uphold the Pompe and State of the Greater Church, and for feare of lessening the Auditory, or diminishing the honour of the Preacher, (who many times deserves little enough) whereas not a fourth part of the Congregation (by this meanes defrauded of Preaching in the Parish Church) can possibly come within hearing, or ken of the Cathedrall Pulpit-man.

O Beloved! are these, wayes to set forth Christ to the people for their salvation, to display *God* in all his glorious Attributes and Perfections, and to bring them within view of the beauties and excel-

2. *Vse.* *Exhortation.* Meanes.

tencies of God in his Covenant and Communication with his people, so as to draw them to a Covenant! Nay hence, hence it comes to passe that God is extremely dishonoured, his Name blasphemed, his day abominably prophaned, and his people runne headlong (like beasts to the Shambles) by droves, to Popery, Anabaptisme, Familisme, Atheisme, and what not, that may cast, and locke them under the hatches of everlasting damnation.

——*Quis talia fando,*
Temperet a lachrymis?——

I know that some of those Step-fathers and hard-hearted Wretches, who bee indeed the chiefe (if not the onely) cause of all this, blush not to attribute the daily falling off of multitudes from our Church, to over-much Preaching: but this is as rationall, as was his mad opinion touching Saint *Paul*, that much *learning had made him mad*. These are crying Abominations, that will cry as loud against you, as now they doe against the Authours of them, if you reforme them not.

Wonder not at my length, and heate in this point. It is a matter of greatest Consequence, and of all other most proper for a Preacher to be zealous in. And give me leave to tell you, that this must bee put in the head of the Catalogue of your weightiest Consultations at this time, if you desire ever to draw the people of this and the Adjacent Dominions into any Covenant and Communion with God, or to settle any thing for the good of your selves and countries.

K. *Iames* indeed tooke commiseration of the grosse ignorance of multitudes in the North parts of this Kingdome, and sent some Preachers at his owne charge among them. A Pious and a Noble worke. But what through the unsetled wandrings, idlenesse, the superficiall and unprofitable performances of some of these Preachers, and what through the supine negligence of some in Authoritie who should have looked better to those itinerary Ministers; most of that labour and charge was little better than lost. For, some of you know, that in no parts of the Kingdome hath there beene such an increase of Papists, as in those very Corners, where that sleight meanes was used to reduce men from Popery.

I beseech you therefore by all the mercies of God, by all the bowels of Christ in shedding of his deerest bloud for those precious Soules, who now, even by thousands and millions miserably perish,

in

in their ignorance and sinnes, that you would carefully reforme, or cast out all idle, unsound, unprofitable, and scandalous Ministers; and provide a sound, godly, profitable and setled Preaching Ministry in every Congregation through the Land and the annexed Dominions; and, to take no lesse care for their diligent and constant performance of their duties both in life and Doctsine, as also for their liberall maintenance, (that may be still capable of improvement, as the times grow harder; and commodities deerer) that both themselves who preach the Gospel, and all theirs also may cheerefully and comfortably live of the Gospell. And let us once see *Zion built up*, by your industry, *in perfect beautie.* 5. *The Exhortation. Meanes.*

Lastly, when you set upon this great businesse of a *Covenant*, see that you doe it out of *love* to God, and with all your heart: else, it will come to nothing. If you would to *Zion, your faces* must bee set, and setled *thitherward.* If you would make a *Covenant*, you must not be unwilling, afraid, ashamed to bee accounted such *Covenanters*, but doe it with a steddy, open, undaunted countenance and resolution. You must *love the name of your God to be his servants, Isay 56. 6.* You have seen how *Asa* and all his kingdome did it; they both entred into Covenant, and they *swore it, with all their hearts, and sought him with their whole desire, and hee was found of them, and gave them rest round about.* 6. *When a Covenant is to be made, doe it with all the heart; and forget it not when it is made.* 2 Chro. 15. 15.

Thus if you doe, God shall be set up, Religion advanced, your grievances removed, you shall heare no more such complainings in our streets. All blessings shall follow, not your selves alone, but the whole Kingdome, in our King and his Government, in your Consultations and proceedings, in the publike, setled, and glorious Peace, and prosperitie of both Church and State. The blessings of the Earth, in the Citie, the field, your bodies, posteritie, in all your goings out and comming in; The blessings of heaven in the meanes of Grace, the beginnings and growth in grace, the light of Gods countenance which is better than life; and, after all, even the fulnesse of both grace and glory in the full, cleare, and eternall fruition of God Himselfe in the highest heavens, shall all compasse, and Crowne you for ever.

Provided alwayes, that when once this Covenant is made, you take care that *it never be forgotten*, but heeded, minded, and performed; that as you close with God, so you may alwayes continue with him

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him. Then shall this whole nation and the children which are yet unborne praise and blesse the Lord for ever for this Parliament, and your endeavours in it. But I feele my selfe spent, and therefore must desist, yet with this hope, that my Reverend fellow-labourer designed for the other part of this worke, will begin where I leave, and set on with more strength what my weakenesse is not able to performe.

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